Jennie Cooper Wallers

THE PROCESS OF PLAY PRODUCTION

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A Book for the Non-Professional Theatre Worker

BY

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AND

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Inscribed to the memories of

THE PRAIRIE PLAYHOUSE

a pioneer in the little theatre movement and one of the first of the non-professional theatres to appear in a small American City.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE GROWTH OF NON-PROFESSIONAL DRAMA

The growth of non-professional drama in the United States has been so rapid and so fruitful that it is pointed to as one of the most interesting of the art adventures in what is termed a dominantly industrial civilization. Non-professional drama has challenged the authority of the professional theatre, has provided creative opportunity and entertainment for hundreds of thousands of men and women and boys and girls, and has carried with its success social, educational, and artistic benefits. We accept the marvel of its growth and accomplishment without surprise; and only when we look back to the conditions existing at the commencement of the present century do we begin to comprehend the magnitude of its work and the changes it has wrought.

From our parents or grandparents we were wont to gain the idea that the theatre was the vestibule of hell, or at least that it was a questionable entertainment agency to be classed with card-playing and dancing. This idea was not new with our im-

mediate forbears; it dates back to the days of the Puritan fathers, who, leaving England when the drama was sinking into licentiousness and when they themselves were frequently made the butt of stage jokes, came to America with a hatred of the theatre in their hearts, and with their wills set upon its eternal prohibition. For one hundred and fifty years the Puritan influence was in the ascendency. Plays were prohibited, actors arrested, laws passed against the theatre as a place of evil, and spectators fined. After America became a republic, the battle began anew. But the foes of the theatre were growing weaker. Playhouses were built, companies formed, dramas written; and the theatre art, following the pioneers into the West, was, by 1850, established from coast to coast and from lakes to gulf.

But while drama was becoming legalized and play-acting was becoming tolerated by the public, the stigma of earlier years was still attached to the art; and no deeper disgrace could befall a pious parent than to have his child decide to adopt the acting profession. Amateur theatricals were unimportant, and for the most part unknown. This is not the place to theorize upon the causes of change in attitude towards amateur drama which preceded its recent growth and expansion. One interesting cause, however, deserves mention. During the seventies and on into the nineties, the

vogue of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas swept England and inundated America; and for some reason these musical plays were not looked upon with the same mistrust and prejudice as were the plays of the legitimate theatre. They seemed jolly and harmless enough, and soon amateur companies began to appear—companies which garbed themselves in the colorful and romantic costumes of Dick Dead-Eye and the Lord High Executioner, and sang the operettas for their friends in town opera houses, in school buildings, and even in the churches.

Just how much modern non-professional drama owes to Gilbert and Sullivan would be difficult to determine; but we do know that after the vogue of the operas had passed, much of the prejudice had also passed, and amateur drama became increasingly more common in our schools and with our lodges and social clubs.

Yet, from the nineties to the outbreak of the World War, about the only accomplishment of amateur drama was a quantitative accomplishment: it enlisted an increasing number of schools and clubs in the giving of plays. The plays were still ridiculous farces or grotesque melodramas, inadequately produced and badly acted before antiquated scenery. But a year or two before the war an interesting dramatic revolt, which had had its beginning in a warehouse theatre in Paris as far

back as 1887, reached America. This revolt has been variously termed the "little theatre movement," the "experimental theatre revolt," and the "art theatre movement." In essence it was a breaking away from both the traditions and the authority of the established theatre, and represented the effort of lovers of drama to produce plays nearer the heart's desire and less for the pocket-books of the managers. In Europe, the movement was non-commercial but largely professional; in America it was both non-commercial and non-professional. It gave to the amateur in America both justification and inspiration; and as the accomplishments of his European predecessors became known, the movement gave his own work purpose. The beginnings of the present non-professional activity may, therefore, be traced directly to the pioneers in the American little theatre movement: notably to the Toy Theatre of Boston and the Little Theatre of Chicago.

The years from 1912 to 1917 witnessed a rapid expansion of the little theatre idea. Small playhouses were fitted up in barns, in abandoned saloon buildings, in warehouses, in halls—wherever rent was low; enthusiastic young men and women went out as directors and, assembling small groups of equally enthusiastic embryonic actors, began giving plays—plays of Galsworthy and Shaw, of Shakespere and Ibsen, plays by the masters and

by unknown writers; and slowly they were gathering small (and again equally enthusiastic) audiences, who, feeling themselves a part of the adventure and, delighting in the intimacy between audience and actors which the small playhouses afforded found a new pleasure in the theatre. In these groups, which were scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific, there was no unity of purpose and frequently no conscious ideal and no hope of worthy accomplishment; but everywhere enthusiasm was paramount, and in this enthusiasm artistic purpose began to generate.

Then came the war. For a time the groups endeavored to hold together; but one by one actors and directors were called into military service. After they had gone, the women and those who had been denied service in the army sought to carry on the work; but gradually the repertories were given up, the doors locked, and the little painted signs torn down. For two seasons the game of play-acting was submerged in the grim absorption of war.

When the war was ended,—and after the enthusiasts, returning from the army, had looked upon their darkened, abandoned theatres, sighed, and turned reluctantly to other dreams,—it gradually became apparent that the pioneer work had not been in vain; that from the dreams, cut short by the war, had sprung new dreams and new ideas;

that the seeds of enthusiasm were bearing fruit. For when the analyst surveyed the situation, let us say in 1922, he saw that non-professional drama had become separated into four divisions, each with a purpose, and each as lively and vigorous as the units in the heterogeneous little theatre movement of the years before the war.

First, he saw certain of the old amateur theatres which had weathered the war still continuing with the old traditions, but growing stronger and accomplishing finer work as a result of their years of experience. Besides these theatres, which for want of a better name we shall group as art theatres, he saw the rising interest in civic and community drama, which encouraged organizations to give plays for the entertainment and social betterment of these communities. Third, he saw the churches, which only a few decades before had been the arch enemies of the theatre, converting their parish houses into temporary playhouses and utilizing drama, as they had done centuries before, as an interpreter of religion. And fourth, he saw the work being carried into the schools, where small stages were being constructed, courses in playwriting and play production instituted, and departments of drama created.

In general, four main purposes are to be found corresponding to each of these four divisions: an artistic, a social, a religious, and an educational

purpose. The purposes of the various divisions overlap, however, and in the school the purpose is not solely educational, but embraces the purposes of the other divisions.

As season has followed season the expansion has continued until now no community, however remote, is without an art, civic, church, or school organization which offers some means for dramatic expression.

While the inexperienced amateur in America has been developing into a drama enthusiast and a theatre worker worthy of the name of non-professional, another event of significance has been taking place in the greater world of the theatre. Partly as an outcome of the revolt in Paris, the important dramatic centers have experienced a renaissance which, in its results, has all but revolutionized dramatic technique, acting tradition, and stage production. With the original revolt went the overthrow of the commercial convention—the production of plays for the sole benefit of the box office. And having become acutely aware of one convention in the theatre, people's eyes were opened to others: to conventions in scenery, in writing, in lighting, in staging. The new and the better were sought for. Experimentation was the interest of the hour. The stage doors were thrown open to the artist, the theorist, the architect, the mechanic, the propagandist, the writer with a new

technique or a new thought. Much that was tried was found good; and that which was found good was improved upon. The theatre began to take on a new dignity and beauty and power. Names of great artists, designers, thinkers were found on the theatre programs. Genius, so long barred from the playhouse, now walked the boards of the stage, directing and advising.

Many and diverse minds working together in the theatre during the first quarter of the twentieth century, made of the acted play a wonderful thing, but a thing of great complexity. Whereas in the old days the director was merely a coach who drilled the actors, dressed them in "stock" costumes found at a convenient costume house, and set them to act before any scenery the theatre happened to have on hand, he now became the master mind of a group of artists,—electricians, painters, designers, writers, musicians, and dancers—calling on each to contribute from his own art something which would add beauty and dramatic power, yet could be moulded into a unified whole, into an impressive illusion of life to be found when the play was acted.

The complex mechanism of the present-day stage is common knowledge. It would be repetitious to explain or even catalogue the new systems of lighting, the method of wagon and revolving stages for the rapid shifting of scenery, the con-

struction and utility of the *kuppel-horizont*—the numberless mechanical devices of the modern theatre. The world theatre in its renaissance, assisted by machinery, by lighting, and by the far-reaching imagination of man, has achieved something perhaps never before realized in theatrical history.

The productivity and genius of the great theatres has been of real significance to the amateurs. No longer are they imitating a simple theatre, or a shoddy theatre, or a theatre given over to commercialism. They are imitating—and in a sense, competing with—an institution which represents the finest genius and the very complex work of a group of the world's first artists. Such competition demands bravery and brains as well as enthusiasm and the query arises, Has the competition and the accomplishment of the non-professional in America been such as to merit our praise or our blame?

Before we answer this question, let us be frank to admit that we still find in the non-professional theatre—and more often than not—a cheap show, badly acted, before inadequate scenery. The reason for this is that everyone is giving plays, and it is not to be expected that all, among the tens of thousands of directors, will have the bravery or the brains to compete with the world theatres. It is not to be expected that each will have the persever-

ance and the ideals necessary to the creation of good productions. Suffice it that in hundreds of communities and schools directors of inspiration and determination and true humility are going about their work intelligently. They are presenting plays that are mentally alive, that are sincere and pertinent and dramatic; they are seeking to train their actors to convincing, unaffected characterizations; they are striving to set their stages with beautiful and effective scenery. It is to this group that we go for an answer to our question.

Our answer is given without hesitation: the non-professionals have secured results which merit our warmest praise. We list the following as the outstanding accomplishments of the non-professional in America who, only a few years ago, was an inexperienced amateur:—

First, by reason of his brains and his imagination and his willingness to work at his job for the job's sake, he has raised production, in numerous instances, to a plane which is only a step below the production of the professional theatre. In many communities he can already compete successfully in production and acting with the travelling professional companies.

Second, he has succeeded in elevating drama appreciation. We can no longer cry with Arthur

Hopkins that the public is "without standards, without discrimination." In hundreds of schools and communities the standard is appearing, the discrimination developing.

Third, by carrying on the process of experimentation, he has discovered new stage devices and new lighting arrangements and has succeeded in setting his stage simply and, at the same time, artistically.

Fourth, he has given the writer of the one-act play his opportunity—the first opportunity he has ever had; and, as a result, a new form of dramaturgy has appeared, a form which gives promise of being as important to drama as the short story has been to fiction.

Fifth, he has brought drama back once more to the people; he has reinstated it as a child of the people, and it is no longer a hired guest among them.

These are his accomplishments. Considering the short time in which he has been working sincerely and with a purpose, are we not justified in according him our generous praise? Surely there is no reason to believe that he has reached his greatest height, that his work will soon begin to slump back into the shoddy, lackadaisical work of the nineties; rather, there are many indications which lead to the belief that his achievement is

still in the making, that he is standing on the threshold of greater and finer successes.

The drama enthusiast, because he is not yet out of the developing stage, still needs suggestion and guidance so that his work shall continue to meet the standard which his brothers have set for him; but more than this, he needs a constantly rising goal, a realization of a bigger task which shall spur his imagination and feed his enthusiasm. The reason for this book is, therefore, two-fold. It is the hope of the authors that the following chapters may yield not only hints and suggestions for practical production, but occasional words of inspiration which will help to keep the amateur's enthusiasm alive to the opportunities which are his.

The authors will endeavor to keep in mind all those who are meeting with the failures and successes of amateur dramatic production; but they will direct their words more especially toward that constantly increasing group of drama enthusiasts to be found in our colleges and schools, who are engaged in a thorough study of the problems of production from the standpoint both of theory and of practice.

If the authors seem at times to talk of drama as a great power and influence, if they seem to present the art of the theatre as something

"clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful," it is because they feel the amateur himself now looks upon drama as something dignified, demanding respect; and that the amateur has climbed to a high place from which he can understand the influence and mystery and wonder of drama.

CHAPTER II

THE DIVISION OF LABOR IN PLAY PRODUCTION

WHETHER he is a neophyte, approaching the stage door for the first time, or whether he has a record of years as amateur actor or director, the modern theatre worker wants to "get busy with things" immediately; he wants to do, not to theorize. This attitude is excellent, for it leads directly to creation, which is what we all desire. But our desire cannot be realized at once. We have first to pause and recall the important fact that the modern stage is not a simple stage. There is the written play, sometimes unpublished and untried; there is the art of acting, embracing pantomime and elocution; there is the scenery, with its questions of construction, design, and color; there is the complex switchboard; there are costumes and properties and stage devices. A long list of arts and forces are operative in the creation of the acted play. From them, in some way, must come a unity. Since they cannot combine of themselves, there must be a number of workmen, each

with an understanding of one or several of these elements which combine to make the play. To begin with the practical work at once may lead to confusion. We shall do better if we first make certain that we understand just what is included in the process of production.

The mention of workmen suggests a division of labor; and we may begin our work, then, with a brief consideration of the division of labor to be found in the process of production. Since modern drama has been given its finest productions, not in the commercial theatres but in those theatres which respect drama as an art, and since, indeed, it is the art theatres which have stirred our enthusiasm and pointed out to us the road to development, we shall turn for a moment to the art theatre and its process of production. We might select the Moscow Art Theatre, Max Reinhart's theatre, the Theatre Guild of New York, or some other well known organization; but we shall find it more advantageous to speak of a hypothetical theatre and describe a process which, in its essential points, is common to many theatres.

The first factor that we note is that of organization. This, however, need not concern us at this time. Neither need we here discuss the second factor: the author who supplies the play. It is the third factor which claims our attention first; we meet it in a personage who was not found in

the old theatres: a creative artist of great authority and ability, who, if we were to note all his functions under one title, might be called the director-manager-producer. Since such a title is cumbersome, we shall designate him the general director. He may be a business man; he probably has been an actor; he is always a creative artist; and usually he has the power of an autocrat.

In some manner a play has reached his hands, and a production has been decided upon. The director now becomes both producer and manager: producer in the sense that the whole plan of production (sometimes down to the smallest details) is created in his own imagination; and manager in the literal sense of the word—that is, the work of production is under his management. The director begins to live with the play. Slowly or rapidly there grows in his imagination a plan of production which satisfies his artist sense and which is in accord with the spirit of the play as revealed by the author. When the concrete plan has begun to form, he is ready for the preliminary work of production.

He now has three groups of people to take into account: the business group, the actors, and the stage or technical staff. He must consult with the business group because the cost of production may be heavy, and he has to be sure of his avail-

able funds; and through the business group the advertising and publicity must be carried on. Likewise, he must get in touch with his actors. Perhaps the organization has a permanent company of actors, in which case the casting of the play will be made from the theatre company. If there is no permanent company, the director will choose from those professional actors who are at liberty or who can be released from other contracts. Again, the production calls for scenery, lighting, and costumes. The director, with his general plan in mind, now begins a series of conferences with his artist or art director, and perhaps with other members of the stage staff, who set to work on their stage plans and sketches. If the play calls for music, the director must consult with a composer and, if dancing is to be introduced, with a dancing master.

At length, and it may be many months after the play has been selected, the actual work of production begins. The cast is assembled, and either the author, or some one appointed by him, reads the play, adding explanations and answering questions until the actors have a comprehensive idea of the play as a whole and a working knowledge of their individual parts. Rehearsals are started. Meanwhile the art director is busy with his designs and plans. Perhaps the general director can entrust all the work of stage embel-

lishment to this artist. But the art director is concerned with only a part of the production; the general director, with the production as a whole. The ideas of the two men must agree, and in this matter, the general director must have the final word.

The theatre now becomes a lively place. The business force gets into action. It is presumed that the actors are trained men and women who know the technique of acting and who possess the natural requisites of the actor. With them the director's work of direction, in its limited sense, begins. He lays out the "general business" of the play, assigns stage positions, arranges groupings which shall have dramatic or pictorial value. This done, he (or his assistants) helps the actors in their creation of character and coaxes or exhorts them toward the mood of the play. He may be, during these days, a combination of teacher, slave-driver, guide, and sympathetic friend. He must also during this period give an eye to the work of the stage staff. After many experimental efforts, agreement has been reached and the plans have been approved. Now, just as an architect's drawings are placed in the hands of the contractor, plumber, electrician, and painter, who bring the drawings to full realization, so the art director's sketches and designs are passed on to a score of skilled craftsmen and artists—carpen-

ers, painters, mechanics, costumers, electricians,—who set to work constructing and painting the scenery, arranging the lighting, making the costumes, and finding or constructing the properties.

The manifold work of production proceeds. Progress is made. But perhaps the progress of the director comes to a dead halt in one scene of the play. The actors cannot imbue it with life. Something is wrong. It is found that the motivation is insufficient. The author is brought in and is made acquainted with the difficulty. The scene has to be revised. It is common knowledge that many changes are made in the text of a play during the rehearsals of its first production, for neither the dramatist nor the director may be able to see, in the text, some slight fault or incongruity which, when the play is put on the stage, is decidedly disturbing. Finally the revisions are complete, the rough business has been smoothed out, the actors have "gotten into their parts." The director's business now is to make his actors see and feel the play as a whole; he must demand team work and create out of each actor a unit which fits into a larger unit.

Again for a time progress is steady. Artists, actors, mechanics, and business staff are working actively toward the same end: the presentation of a play that was conceived in the mind of the dramatist, and which is being brought to life

through the imagination, perseverance, and genius of the director. But there are difficulties yet to be overcome. Perhaps the electrician, with the approval of the art director, has arranged an admirable lighting effect which is striking and in harmony with the general mood; but there has not been perfect coördination; for in this scene the business of the actors demands that they shall play up stage, and in consequence they clash with the lighting arrangement. Or, the leading lady becomes ill and an understudy must be rehearsed. Or, something is wrong, and no one seems able to determine what it is. So it goes. A thousand things may happen, and hundreds of them do. Eventually, however, the parts of the production are complete and are ready to be put together. The stage crew has set the stage for the first act. The electrician and his helpers are at the switchboard and spot lights. The actors are making up, or dressing, or are walking nervously about behind the scenes. The prompter is in his box. The call boy is on duty. The director and his assistants are in the auditorium; and perhaps in a rear seat, wishing for a veil of invisibility, sits the fearful author.

From the murmur and din there issues a sharp command. There is silence. The stage lights flash on. The curtain rises. The dress rehearsal has begun.

Some such process is necessary for the creation of the acted play in the modern professional theatre whose aim is an artistic production rather than a financial success; some such process, in miniature, is also carried on in the modern amateur theatre. The production of a play is a challenge. It is an adventure. It is not something to be avoided or dreaded, but something to be entered upon with high spirit. The process of production will be the framework upon which this book will be built. We shall study each part, each step of the process, and attempt to discover the method and practice through which each part is made to operate successfully.

The study of the work of production has already yielded us an important fact: the necessity for a division of labor. In the process we find four groups: the business group, the director, the actor, and the stage groups. The first group is not concerned with the creation of the play, therefore we may confine ourselves for the present to the director, actor, and stage groups, the three which are engaged in the actual work of production. This grouping holds true for the small theatre as well as for the large; for the non-professional as well as the professional. The most authoritative of these groups is the director and his assistants. The director is literally the czar of the production. More is demanded of him than of anyone else.

Through him the production succeeds or fails. The others must be specialists in some phases of the process, he must be a specialist in all its phases. The actor group has the greatest interest for the public. The actor is the interpreter: he is the human element which transforms the speech and actions conceived by the dramatist into living illusion or living symbols. The art director and his assistants comprise the group which, at the present time, is receiving most attention. The art director clothes the play; and the dress which he creates must fit, must be harmonious and beautiful, and must express the personality of the play.

In this division of labor it is evident that there is opportunity for people of varied talents to become integral parts in the production of the play. It is not necessary that an actor be able to paint scenery or design costumes; it is not necessary that an electrical wizard be able to act. The general director, it is true, must or should have a knowledge of the entire process of production; but the artist, the designer, the mechanic, the actor, may each find use for his talents upon the stage.

Let us not forget, however, that the play must be a unit: that while each group or person contributes his part, the whole is always greater than its parts. This division of labor does not imply

complete freedom. The individual worker is subservient to the play as a whole. For this reason he cannot devote himself to his own craft or art and be ignorant of the other crafts and arts of the production. He will be a better stage electrician if he knows something of the director's problems and a great deal about the other departments of a stage craft. He will be a better art director if he knows, from experience, the actor's viewpoint. It is reasonable, therefore, to insist that each theatre worker learn something of the entire process of production. The artist who devotes some time to the theory and practice of both direction and acting will be more valuable to the theatre because of his experience.

The preceding discussion has not taken into account one figure which has become a vital part of non-professional drama, especially school drama, namely, the teacher. Many men and women of ability and training, and possessed of the important "stage sense" have found adequate opportunity for sincere dramatic work in our colleges and schools. Each year an increasing number of students interested in practical dramatics are preparing themselves as teachers of drama. The teacher must not be omitted from our study. Any discussion of the director will apply to the teacher; but the teacher must possess in addition extraordinary patience and vision. Some space,

therefore, will be devoted to the special problems of the teacher.

If this brief synopsis of the process of production has brought to our minds the complexity of the process, the division of labor, the overlapping of the work of the various groups and individuals, and the final unity which must result from the work, it is perhaps adequate; and we are now ready for a consideration of the first factor noted in our approach to the question of the theatre, the factor of organization. We are primarily interested in the creation of the play; but only through an adequate organization is a successful division of labor with its resultant successful production possible. Our first practical problem, then, will be the problem of theatre organization.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION

The man outside the theatre, unacquainted with the amount and variety of work which a production entails, may give no thought to the necessity for organization; but everyone of intelligence who has watched a play grow from manuscript to first night knows, and knows conclusively, from his own observation and experience, that organization is necessary. The answer to the question "Why should there be organization?" is simple and indisputable. There should be organization because a theatre cannot present well-staged plays and cannot insure its continuance without it.

There are little theatres and art groups, community theatres and dramatic clubs of all kinds and without number. Some flourish for a season or two, grow feeble, and die; others live on, growing more healthy and prosperous from year to year. If we were to seek a cause for the progress and longevity of this second group, we should usually find it in sound organization. The little or school theatre which is prospering is soundly

organized on a basis which will assist it in two ways: first, to accomplish its ideal and, second, to insure its continuance from year to year. Let us emphasize this double purpose of organization by repetition: to accomplish its ideal and to insure its continuance.

Organization includes both the general theatre organization and the inner organization which is concerned with the actual work of production. We shall find as we proceed that the general and inner organization necessary for the independent non-professional theatre differ from that which is sufficient for the school theatre. We shall consider in turn the organization of these two theatres and, for the time, we shall assume that they have a common general aim: to produce honestly and artistically a type of play not designed to kill idle moments, but to yield a dignified pleasure or a profit to the audience.

1. A Plan of Organization for the Independent Non-professional Theatre

What things are essential to the accomplishment of the ideal in an independent theatre? A competent director, freedom, and some factor of restraint which acts as a check upon freedom. When we say a competent director we include in the word "competent" a thorough understanding

of the stage and a spirit which is willing to fight for the ideal; our conception of freedom embraces the right to experiment, to go down new paths, and the absence of either rules or personalities which encourage snobbishness and exclusiveness; and we would balance this freedom with a restraining force which prevents one-man control, misuse or overuse of funds, and which keeps freedom from becoming license. This balance of freedom and restriction is not usually attained when the policy of the theatre is controlled by one man; it is more frequently the result of a group of minds working together, capable of eliminating the personal element and of clinging to the ideal.

What will tend to insure the continuance of the theatre? Good productions; a satisfied, growing audience; and sufficient revenue.

Now the independent theatre usually develops from the intelligent desires of a group of workers in the allied arts of the theatre. This group has its ideal and wishes its theatre to continue. The general organization which it forms should include, therefore, a competent director found either within the group or outside it. If it is to secure freedom and its balance of restraint, this organization must not be political or exclusive, must not be capable of deflection into a mutual admiration society; and these pitfalls may be avoided by the creation of some sort of executive council or

governing board which shall be elected in some democratic manner. To insure a satisfied, growing audience, the group needs on this board or on some other board, men and women of varied professions and tastes whose interests extend beyond the stage to other interests of life. To succeed financially it must have a business manager, or better, a committee composed of a number of business men and women who are in touch with the community, and are open-eyed and "hard-headed."

Upon the basis of this analysis of the needs, let us work out a general organization for a little theatre which wishes to become known as a community theatre. As we plan, we must beware of over-organization as well as under-organization. Let us begin with the initial group which wishes to start the theatre. The first step is a preliminary organization which shall put the project into operation. Two men, a director and a business manager, will be able to start things. It is the director's task to set up a production organization and put on a good play; the business manager's, to get out an audience to see the play. Let us assume that the play, or perhaps several bills of plays, have been given, and that success has rewarded the efforts of both director and manager. Interest has been aroused, and a small audience is looking forward to further productions. As soon

as possible now, the permanent organization should get under way. At this early stage, the audience and finances are among the very important factors. What shall be the financial policy of the theatre? Three policies are possible. The theatre may be subsidized; or sufficient revenue may be had from members of the audience who, by contributing a modest sum, become a part of the theatre organization; or, third, the business manager may depend solely upon the sale of tickets at the box office for his revenue. Subsidy is unwise and usually should be avoided even when it is available. The box office receipts are not always sufficient. The second policy, therefore, seems advisable.

The theatre workers and their friends may now make a canvass of the community and find a number of people who are willing to become sustaining members or "stockholders" in the venture by paying an annual fee of ten, twenty-five, or fifty dollars. In return, they become members of the theatre association and receive tickets to the performances. They become a part of the theatre, and their interest in its welfare is increased.

Let us say that by the end of the first season the plan of permanent organization is complete and the members of the association are ready to be given a share in the operation of the enterprise. It is neither wise nor practicable for them

to have direct charge of the work of management or production. But the first annual meeting of the association is called, and in this meeting the members elect, from their own number, a board of directors, or council, of seven or nine members. This council will act for the association in matters of both business and production. It is desirable that the council, while representing a variety of tastes and professions, shall be a unit in its respect for the theatre.

The appointment of both business manager and director is now in the hands of the council; and under the council's supervision the further work of organization proceeds. It might be advisable to make both business manager and director members of the council or, at least, permit them to attend its meetings. The business manager has three committees responsible to him. These are: the membership committee, whose task is to increase the membership of the association; the publicity committee, which takes care of advertising and publicity; and the finance committee, which attends to rentals and production expenses and, in general, takes charge of the budget. The director likewise has three committees: the play and players committee, which assists the director in finding suitable plays and in drawing new players from the community; the casting committee, which assists him in casting the plays,

though final selection of the cast is left in his own hands; and the production committee, which has charge of the work of production.

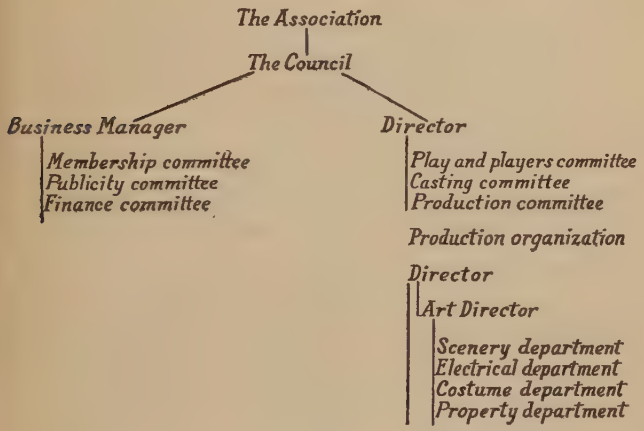
The mention of this last committee brings us to what we have called the inner organization. Before we discuss it, let us clear up several points in respect to the general organization. The council, acting for the association, is final authority (save in matters which especially concern the association) in all questions of procedure and policy. It may leave the business policy largely to the business manager, and the policy of production to the director; or it may appoint the committees, decide upon plays, and in other ways become active in the routine procedure. The second plan is more democratic, is more in keeping with the community idea, but it does not always lead to the most desirable financial or artistic success. The business manager and the director are to a great extent independent of each other; but when a production is in progress, the business manager must use all his resources toward making the production the success desired by the director; on the other hand, before the production is started, the director must consult with the business manager and respect his judgment in regard to the season's budget. The director's committees are quite unequal in their importance to him. The play and players com-

mittee may be of great assistance; it may search for plays, read plays, discover people who want to act, and try them out, thus relieving the director of much preliminary work. The casting committee, however, is usually little more than nominal. It may advise the director and attend to the routine work in connection with the try-outs, but such a committee is never as capable of selecting a good cast as is a competent director. This committee can be dispensed with without injury to the organization.

The production organization is really found within the production committee. The director is its supreme authority, subject only to the council; and if the council is wise it will not interfere in his use of authority, save in unusual instances. The work of production is carried on through departments. There are the department of direction, and the scenery, electrical, costume, and property departments. During the work of production the director is actively occupied with the direction of his actors, and the business of the other departments may be left largely to the art director. These departments may consist of one person, or they may consist of a committee; that is, we may have a costumer who, under the guidance of the art director, attends to the matter of costumes, or we may have a costume committee which acts in this capacity. The heads of the de-

partments compose the production committee and, with the art director and the director, form the production organization.

The complete organization may now be expressed graphically as follows:



This, then, is a working plan for an independent theatre organization. It will not fit all communities. Indeed, every reader, considering it in relation to his own community, will immediately see how and where it should be altered and improved. But it does represent a plan upon which to begin work. Actual experience and individual conditions will suggest the alterations. Some such organization will be found in operation, not only in a number of well known professional theatres,

but also in several community theatres in our own country.

2. A Plan of Organization for the College Group

We have suggested that the organization of a college theatre will not be the same as that of an independent theatre because of the different conditions existing on the campus. For example, we find in the college a constantly changing student body which makes continuity of effort much more difficult. Again, we find in the college a clear division among those students who have an instinct for practical drama. There are those who want to put on plays for fun and with the least possible effort, and those who take production seriously and are willing to work hard in order to produce a really good play. These two classes are not sharply distinguished in the high school, where the student's will in the matter of plays is not so strong and where he is usually satisfied with his teacher's supervision of dramatic activities; and neither are they so observable in the small college where the student body is limited in numbers and where the spirit is more unified. But in the university the two classes are active. The first class, which at the outset is invariably the larger, forms a dramatic club which has no creed or goal and

which is not interested in progress. The second class, which usually develops among the students studying production and play writing, tends to organize more after the manner of the little theatre group. These two classes are found also in the community; but on the campus the first class has to be reckoned with. Another point of difference is seen in the fact that the aim of the college is to educate, and the activities, especially those for which credit is given, must be educational or "academic." Again, in the college we meet certain administrative and faculty rules which contribute their share in determining the nature of the organization; for instance, the director of plays is frequently a member of the faculty, the college business office keeps an eye on the funds, there are rules regarding the participation in activities, and a theatre is generally provided on the campus.

These facts yield us certain more or less obvious points in regard to our college theatre and its organization. First, college conditions determine that we shall be more concerned with the inner organization than with the general organization. Second, the organization should be both flexible and conservative: flexible to the extent that it will give all students an opportunity to share in the productions, will permit of change and development, and will allow for special circumstances

which are continually arising; conservative in that it shall emphasize the simple and fundamental things and not bother itself with fads and special training. Third, its policy should be both educational and popular. It should offer instruction, training, laboratory experience in production, but its plays should set a high standard and have a wide and varied appeal. Fourth, it should endeavor to establish and preserve a tradition which will offset the lack of continuity in its membership.

In a college organization no association of the members of the audience is essential. Expenses are not so heavy as in the independent theatre, and it is usually easy to get an audience for college plays. An important task, therefore, is not to bring together an audience, but to bring together a number of students who are interested in the various phases of the work. The organization should be democratic enough to include all who desire to work, and aristocratic enough to attract the best students. The organization will become aristocratic and popular when it begins to do things better than they have been done before. Let us outline a modest, workable organization for a college community.

There is an association, or club, elected from the student body. Members may enter the club through any one of its four departments: the busi-

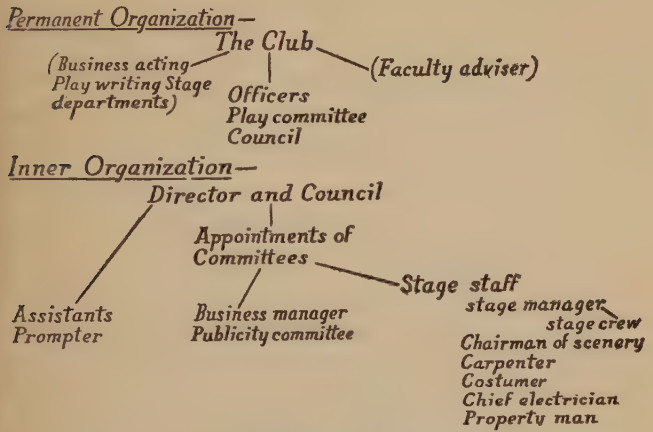
ness, acting, stage, and play writing departments. The club operates as a unit, and there is no distinction made between the departments. Each has the same voice in affairs, and the members of one department may work in another department at any time; that is, a member who has been elected because of his business ability may try out for a part, or may become one of the stage staff. The departmental division is to secure for the club, not actors only, but people who can attend to the entire work of the production. Election to the association is held after try-outs or after a production. For instance, if a candidate has done good publicity work, or has been an efficient "prop" man, or has written a play which has been accepted for production, or has acted in one of the club's plays, he becomes eligible for membership. The club elects the usual executive and administrative officers; it elects a council (somewhat similar to the independent theatre council), a play committee, and an historian, who keeps an attractive pictorial and written record of the productions; and it includes in its membership a faculty director, who serves, at all times, as adviser. This constitutes the permanent organization.

Several productions are planned each year. The year's program is decided in advance, but for each production a temporary inner organization is

effected. The director and the council work out this organization. A business manager is selected from among the "business members," ordinarily; and after consultation with him, the council gives him a publicity committee and any other assistants he desires to complete his business staff. Announcements of the production have been made, and the period for try-outs is open. Some students may wish to enter the club through the business department, and these candidates are given try-out tasks by the business manager.

From the stage department an art director or stage manager is appointed. If the stage manager is really capable of acting as art director, he should be given authority and a voice in the selection of the production staff; if not, this selection is in the hands of the executive committee and director. The staff includes stage carpenter, scenic artist, electrician, costumer, and property man. It is a good plan to make each of these workmen a chief or chairman and allow him to select people to assist him; however, he must always provide an opportunity for any candidate who wishes to try-out in his department. The stage manager appoints his stage crew to assist with the performances. The director appoints his prompter and those who will aid him in carrying on the rehearsal work.

Again we may express our organization graphically:



The play committee and the director, with the council, will choose the plays and plan a program for the year; this program may then be approved by the club as a whole. The inner organization is changed with each production in order to give the members an opportunity to increase their range of experience in stage work. An ideal tradition for a club would be one which decrees that a member becomes influential and worthy of election to the council only after he has tried his hand at everything from shifting scenery to direction. The director is in a position always to give advice or assume responsibility, but does not control the policy or procedure of the club.

This may or may not be the ideal organization. Our strongest defence of it is that it will yield results. Let us in conclusion repeat what we said at the beginning, that some sort of organization which shall accomplish the ideal and insure the continuance of the theatre is necessary; and let us warn the beginners not to slight their production organization.

3. A Further Word on the Business Staff

Before we pass on to a detailed study of the process of production from the standpoints of those who work behind the scenes, may we pause long enough to speak a further word on the subject of the business staff? The giving of a fine performance is, of course, the goal of production; but we cannot give many fine performances unless we secure audiences who will support us through their interest and their money; and we cannot secure audiences without the aid of an efficient business manager or a business staff. If we are actors, or directors, or stage artists, our imaginations may be fired by such things as characterization, stage pictures, and light and scenic effects, and the thought of working out and putting into operation an effective business policy may seem like throwing a wet blanket over our dreams; but the business side of production is of great importance,

—it can become an integral part of the dream; and if the game of publicity and advertising does not appeal to us, we must find some one to whom it does appeal.

The size of the community, the magnitude of the venture, and the frequency with which performances are to be given, are among the factors which determine the number on the business staff and the training and ability required of the members. If the community is small and without many entertainment agencies, and if the producing group desires to give only an occasional modest performance, then one man is probably sufficient to take charge of the business affairs; if the community is large and there is competition for the interest and attendance of the public, if the group desires to give a full season of well-staged, occasionally expensive, plays, then a carefully organized staff is advisable. As in many other matters, common sense and individual conditions must govern the organization of this branch of the work.

Shall we hire a business manager to do this work for us? In the majority of cases it is not necessary. A community (either town or college) usually possesses several young men and women who are sympathetic towards the theatre project and who are glad to contribute of their business talents to the adventure. One should, however, be prepared to pay a business manager for his serv-

ices rather than proceed without business advice and guidance.

It goes without saying that the business manager must be sympathetic towards his work. He should not be an outsider, from whom all knowledge of plans and prospects is withheld. He should sit with the theatre workers at their conferences. His sympathy should be turned into enthusiasm. He cannot work whole-heartedly for a venture which he only half believes in or half understands.

Likewise, he should be a man of some experience and of some intuition in regard to the mind and spirit of his community. He cannot afford to experiment and gamble with his public to any great extent; he must reach their minds and pique their interest, yet must not offend against good taste.

Frequently it is possible to enlist the services of several individuals who will contribute of their knowledge and talents towards the financial success of the theatre. The editor of the local paper is almost without exception a man anxious to contribute to the welfare and enjoyment of community life; his advice on means and methods of interesting the community is always worth considering. Perhaps some store or business has an advertising manager whose practical knowledge of the community can be utilized. Newspaper ad-

vertising may be effective or it may not be. If a business manager spends $50 on newspaper advertising which nobody reads, he has wasted $50. An advertising manager will be able to advise him how to use his advertising budget so that it will bring results. The same is true of poster and show-card advertising. In many communities, especially school communities, the windows and bulletin boards are constantly being filled with posters, announcing this, that, and everything. Another poster, composed in the same style, even though it carries information about a very important or unusual production, will pass unnoticed. Here again, trained technical knowledge may be used to advantage. The poster to be effective must be attractive, must arrest attention, yet must possess dignity and be in good taste.

As we have suggested, if the theatre is small and one man is able to manage all of the business affairs, there is no need of superfluous organization; but even so, unless he is unusually keen and capable, he should seek the advice of those in the community who can, and usually are willing to, be of service to him. If he has his publicity and advertising committees, he should include in these committees men and women such as those of whom we have been speaking, or he should insist that his committee get in touch with them.

The adventure of bringing a theatre dream from fancy to reality does not rest solely with those behind the scenes; the business manager has his share (and it is not a small share) in the adventure. He is the representative of the theatre before the public; he is the spokesman for the thetre; in his advertising, his publicity, his programs, he gives to the theatre a character and personality; and occasionally the adventure will succeed or fail because of his attitude, enthusiasm, or ability.

CHAPTER IV

PRODUCTION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE DIRECTOR

As has been stated, the actual work of production embraces the work of director, actor, and art director, together with the work of their assistants. The work of the director formerly embraced little more than the drilling of the actor in lines and the assignment of movements and gestures; the work of the actor was effortless and was accepted in a lenient and friendly spirit; while the art director had no work, the stage manager easily attending to the simple duties involved in "getting the stage ready"; but now the director is a true creator with intelligence and imagination, the actor's work is frequently judged by professional standards, and the art director must be an artist skilled in design, in the handling of pigment and light, in costuming, and in all that is included in complete, effective stage embellishment. The work of amateur production is frequently in the hands of one person, but for the purposes of discussion we will divide the work into its three departments, studying each in turn.

1. Prerequisites of the Director

The director has moved from the lowly position of coach or drill master to a position in which he supervises and correlates the work of a staff of artists, blending their work into an artistic and dramatic unit. We have said that the director is a creative artist. Just what do we mean by this? When we speak of the poet as an artist, we do not need to define our statement. A sunset is his material, a pencil and a poetic form his medium. So for the sculptor, a human body is the material, his chisel and a block of marble the medium; for the painter it is a landscape, and his brush and canvas. Each of these men is an artist in that through his medium he creates something new out of his material. The director works in the same fashion. The play is his material, the actors (set upon a stage between the audience and the stage decorations) are his medium, and through his medium he creates out of his material something which did not exist before.

Not every amateur director is a creative artist, but it is the accepted goal of the amateur; it is the height toward which he is drawing nearer year by year. Now, let it be understood that no book can inform the reader how to become an artist; no book can inform the most ambitious candidate how to become a director. Much knowledge and the

mastery of formula and rule will never make a director. A great deal of the director's success or failure depends upon the personal equation: upon native talent and instinct and peculiarities of personality. The prospective director may, however, determine to some extent his own chance of failure or success by inquiring of himself whether he possesses the prerequisites necessary to successful direction. This may be done, though inadequately, by asking himself the following questions:

First, when I read a play do I stage that play in my own mind? In my imagination do I visualize the setting, see the stage movement, feel the emotions of the characters, hear the words spoken by the characters—the strength and quality of voice, the dialect, the inflections?

Second, when I read a play can I put myself in the position of the ordinary member of the audience? Am I considering his viewpoint, his reaction to lines, characterization, situation; his sense response to lighting effects, costumes, scenery? Am I hearing what he is hearing, seeing what he is seeing? In other words, can I submerge my own technically trained likes and dislikes in the likes and dislikes of the crowd?

Third, do I get on with people? Have I a personality which permits me to make people work with me and for me?

Fourth, do I know something about the actor's

viewpoint? Can I understand his problems? Am I capable of sympathizing with his difficulties as he studies his lines, as he tries to create his character, as he perfects his stage business? And can I help him in the solution of his problems?

Fifth, when I go to the theatre can I pick out the work of the director from that of the author and actor? Do I see his work in the stage business, the ensembles, the pauses, the pace of the play? And do I see the reasons for the direction?

Sixth, have I an interest in scenery, lighting, acting, design, movement, diction,—in all those units which, when brought together in good proportion, give us the modern stage play? For, let us repeat once more, the director's work is many-sided; he should know something of the theory and practice of half a dozen different arts; even though he may not be able to paint or to put together electrical apparatus, he has to know the stage possibilities of lighting and painting, and how to employ these arts in building his larger unit.

If I can answer these questions, or the majority of them, affirmatively, then I may believe that there is hope for me as a director. If the questions bore me, if I recognize that I am without imagination, without resourcefulness, without the patience to learn all the phases of direction, then I had better turn my attention to some other kind of stage work, for I shall never be able to give any-

thing but bad, amateurish productions, with which, surely, we are already plentifully supplied. Even if I find that I can answer the questions satisfactorily, it does not follow that I shall be a successful director; but it does follow that I am justified in attempting the work of creating the acted play.

2. General Theatre Terms Explained

The theatre employs a number of terms which are not in common usage, but which soon become the property of the theatre worker. However, in order that he may not become confused as he proceeds, it is advisable that the prospective director glance through the following paragraphs and make sure that he is familiar with the terms mentioned.

There are a number of terms such as flats, sky-borders, and cut-outs, which refer to scenery, and others such as spot, flood lights, and dimmers, which are of special interest to the electrician. These will be explained in a later chapter under a section on stage craft. Many, however, relate to the theatre or the stage. These are of particular interest to the director.

By the *front of the house* we mean the auditorium in distinction from the stage. An accurate definition of the *proscenium* would be "that

part of the stage in front of the curtain"; but the proscenium usually denotes the stage opening behind which the curtain is hung. *Apron*, a word rapidly disappearing from the theatrical vocabulary, refers to that portion of the stage (found in old theatres) which extends in a curve beyond the proscenium opening and into the auditorium, thus providing an acting space in front of the proscenium frame. The *baize* is the name given to the cloth floor-covering of the stage. The *wings* formerly designated the pieces of scenery, such as panels or trees, which were used to mask the sides of the stage; today the term frequently denotes the stage space at the sides and beyond the scenery. *Down stage* means the portion of the stage near the footlights; *up stage*, the portion away from the footlights. By the *flies* is meant the space over the whole stage above the top of the proscenium opening, including everything found there, such as the fly galleries and the paraphernalia for handling scenery.

In the stage directions of the play the director may occasionally come upon expressions or abbreviations that are puzzling. *Right stage* and *left stage* refer to the actor's and not the spectator's right and left. Such abbreviations as *L U E* (left upper entrance) which are found in the old plays, are relics of the days when entrances were made between the wings, and these abbrevia-

tions are no longer employed; but the abbreviations *C.*, *L.*, *R.*, are still used for center, left, and right.

There are also several terms which apply to the director's work with his actors. The word *cue*, which refers to the last word or words of a speech, is common knowledge. *Props* means properties and may refer either to the heavier properties, such as furniture, or to the lighter hand properties which are used by the actors. *Right* and *left* have been explained. To be *out of the picture* or *out of the frame* means that the actor has advanced too close to the footlights and is in front of the proscenium opening. Such expressions as "*Clear stage! Places! Curtain!*" heard frequently immediately before the beginning of the play, are self explanatory.

3. The Business of Putting on a Play

(a.) finding the play

According to several books on the subject of amateur production, the problem of choosing a play seems to be a pleasant and simple occupation if certain lists of "dos" and "don'ts" are obeyed. Nothing is farther from the truth. One of the most difficult, and alluring tasks which the director has to face is that of finding a suitable play. It is so easy to advise: Choose a play worth

doing. But no one needs this advice. And what kind of yardstick are we going to use for measuring the worth of a play, and how shall we tell whether or not the play will be worth doing at a particular time, with particular actors, before a particular audience?

In the matter of plays, shall we hitch our wagon to a star and go shooting off into the ethereal dramatic heavens? Possibly this is the very sort of excursion our actors and audience need and desire; possibly it is not. Shall we look upon Russian gloom as God-sent Truth with which we will shock our audience? It may be that our audience would be thankful for a dash of Russian gloom; but then again, this gloom might alienate them from us for an entire season.

Shall we say: Choose a play within the range and size of your cast? What intelligent director needs any such instruction? As we endeavor to answer with concrete advice this question of finding a play, we find ourselves repeating the old platitudes, which, on the one hand, are useless because of their impracticability and, on the other hand, are childish, and insulting to the intelligence of the director.

We seem forced to the remark that finding a play depends upon individual circumstances; and when we say this, we perceive that we have said nothing helpful. It is only when we begin to con-

template the word *circumstances* that we find a thought or two which may be of a little value. The circumstances include stage equipment, acting material, and also a state of mind prevalent in the community. As a director sets out in search of a play, he should become a psychologist, seeking to determine and understand the state of mind of his school or town audience. This state varies; but some desires, thoughts, conventions, and traditions are always dominant. If he knows them, he has found a better answer to his question than any he will find in the books dealing with the subject. He cannot disregard this state of mind. The prospects of one of the most hopeful little theatre ventures in the country were doomed because the director did not understand this state of mind, or consistently disregarded it.

But the director must not be dictated to by the audience, for dictation will tend to break down his own will and purpose. He must not even ask them what they want. Frequently they themselves do not seem to know and insist that they want to see only light comedy in the theatre, whereas the truth is that they enjoy nothing so much as being moved to tears. The successful seeker after a play must know without inquiring what are the desires of his audience. Do not be down-hearted; this knowledge is more easily acquired than you think.

Just how then does the director find his play? Well, he may have a council or committee which chooses his play for him, in which case he misses some hard work as well as a lot of fun. But this is begging the question. In most cases he proceeds somewhat as follows: Influenced by such things as the nature of his audience, the limitations of his actors, and the possibilities of his stage, he sets out much after the manner of the old prospector in search of gold. He reads plays and more plays. The days pass by, and he discovers nothing. At times his discouragement is as great as that of the old prospector. But, like the prospector, he does not give up. And one day he strikes it rich. He finds the very play he has been looking for! It fits the cast, the stage, the audience. And with high enthusiasm he enters upon his work of production.

There is a play somewhere which meets every need. The director's first task is to go on an adventure for it and stick to the adventure until he finds it.

He may, of course, have help in his search. Such help is to be found in the selective lists of plays published by the Drama League of America, and in the various books on production that have appeared since 1914; in the lists often found in compilations of modern plays, both one-act and long plays; in the catalogues of drama publish-

ing houses, notably those of Samuel French in New York and Walter H. Baker in Boston; and in the reviews and texts of plays found in such magazines as *The Drama* and *The Theatre Arts Monthly*. These lists cannot always be depended upon; they may be misleading or may not give enough information about the plays to be of help. But they will furnish stimulating suggestions and may lead the searcher, through a labyrinth of plays, to the one he is hoping to find.

The director may also receive help in this, and in other matters, from his fellow directors in his own community and in other communities. Directors have lived too much to themselves; they have not coöperated sufficiently; perhaps a neighboring director knows the very play which is desired and can give valuable suggestions concerning its production.

Does the reader feel that this discussion has been of but little value to him in his business of finding a play? Let him remember that with each step in the process of production there are problems for which no general answers can be given. If this were not true, the game would lose much of its challenge.

(B) SELECTING THE CAST

The beginner sometimes asks: "Shall I select my play before my cast, or first choose my actors

and then find a play for them?" Here is another question to which there is no ready answer. If the director knows anything about his acting material, and he usually does, then the play and the cast are dependent upon each other, and together they influence his choice; that is, before he reads a play he thinks of the actors he can count upon, and as he reads he thinks of various people acting in this play. But if something must be said upon the point of priority, let it be this: In most cases it is far easier to find a play which fits the talents of a particular group of amateur actors than it is to find amateur actors who can meet the acting requirements of a play chosen with no reference to a particular group.

As we have said, the director should know something about his acting material before the selection of the play. Obviously a director cannot tell from a prospective actor's reading of lines whether or not he will be able to bring to the part the poise, control, voice, emotional power necessary. It may be advantageous, therefore, for the director to discover who his actors are and what they can do before he selects a particular cast. A general idea of a prospective actor's ability may be gained in several ways. One way which has proved helpful is as follows:

Let the director prepare a series of problems

for the candidate. Let these include the reading of a quotation from Shakespere for examination of the candidate's enunciation, articulation, and general reading intelligence; a problem in pantomime to test his imagination and his ability to create stage business and stage illusion; several short speeches in character and in dialect; any simple voice exercise which will determine tone quality and range; and certain exercise such as walking across the stage, bowing, sitting, rising, for the study of poise, grace, and bodily control. With such a guide let the director examine the candidate. Only the exceptional candidate will come off with honors in each test, but from the examination the director should be able to form an adequate judgment of the actor's outstanding abilities and inabilities.

However, this is preliminary. The play has been chosen, and the problem of definite casting is at hand. In this work of casting the director should have absolute freedom. Let the director call in friends for advice, or let him have a committee to advise him; but he should not trust the casting of his play to a casting group, and he *will not* if he is a self-respecting director. In this matter, as in many others, he should be a despot and exercise full authority.

What points must he bear in mind as he casts

his play? It goes without saying that he must bear in mind the characteristics of each of the parts for which he is to choose an interpreter; yet how often does a director cast a play without thoroughly studying his characters, only to become aware of his negligence after the play is in rehearsal and his mistake in casting is well nigh irremediable.

In examining a candidate he will think of his voice, of its range, flexibility, and control; he will think of his bodily movements; of his experience, intelligence, and acting sense; and he will think of his emotional nature. But the director sometimes strikes a snag when he comes to the question of physical fitness. If the part calls for a blonde, shall he choose a brunette? If it calls for a pretty girl, dare he choose someone who is not pretty? Let him bear in mind that the stage lights bring about magical transformations; that, with the aid of costumes, make-up, and lighting, the tall may be made short and the ugly beautiful. The question does not become serious until he comes to the character parts. Such parts depend, in many instances, upon natural physical qualifications for their convincing interpretation; and the director, though he may chafe at doing so, must recognize this and choose actors who will fill the physical requirements.

Whether the cast be chosen by means of try-outs or whether the director choose his actors without competition, is a minor question and one dependent upon individual conditions. Competition is good; it is stimulating and tends to create wider interest. Try-outs are necessary when the director is not acquainted with his actors. But no advice in the matter can be consistently followed. Whatever method is used, the examination should be thorough and fair. It is grossly unfair of a director to put the lines of a play into the hands of actors who have never seen the lines before and ask them to read for him. Such a procedure is unfair to both the candidate and himself. It gives the clever or lucky candidate the advantage. If the candidate is sensitive (and he should be), he will be feeling for the part, he will be mentally disturbed, and he will read the lines badly. If he is inexperienced, or if he is slow in getting into a part (and many good actors are), he will not do himself justice. The candidate should have had the play read and explained to him; better, he should have been given the opportunity to read it for himself. At the least, he should be tested on a type of material with which he is not wholly unfamiliar.

The casting of a play is a troublesome matter for the beginning director; but after a time, if he

is patient, he may be surprised to find himself in possession of a sixth sense—an instinct for choosing actors.

(c) ORGANIZATION OF THE STAFF

The reader is by this time acquainted with the question of organization and the nature of the process of production. Without being repetitious, let us say that as soon as his decision to give a play is made, the director should begin to think of his production staff. He should not delay its organization. The staff must be set to work. Let him not think that they can work without guidance. Even if he is so fortunate as to have an art director, he must set him to work early and keep in constant touch with him in order that the plan of the scenery shall not be changed without his knowledge and in order that the stage shall be ready for dress rehearsals. With the art director's aid he will have constantly to urge and advise the staff. He alone knows the play which is to be created upon the stage; and he alone must correlate the production work and build it up into a unified whole.

The chief business of the staff is to see that its work is done; its second business is to see that the work is done on time. What is the nightmare of ninety-nine per cent of non-professional pro-

ductions? It is the dress rehearsal—those long hours of agony in which for the first time lights, costumes, scenery, and properties are tried out; in which the actors, whose nerves are raw from weeks of rehearsing, go all to pieces; and in which the director, filled with despair over the chaos his days of struggle have wrought, recognizes that he is a failure in life and contemplates suicide. Such a situation is as unnecessary as it is common. It means a public performance which lacks precision, polish, and the comforting quality of reserve power; and such a performance can be avoided in the majority of cases if the organization is what it should be, and if it gets its work done on time.

(D) STAGE BUSINESS

Before he puts his play into rehearsal, the director works out his stage business. In the matter of stage business he is governed not only by imagination and common sense, but by convention and the principles of design. Are there those who believe that, in connecting closely the presumably simple matter of stage business with design and convention, we are becoming too complex or too æsthetic? that we are leaving the essentials for the non-essentials? Let us see if we are.

The stage in Shakespere's day was a speaking platform; the ear, rather than the eye, was ap-

pealed to; the word was all-important; the stage, bare of scenery and cluttered up with members of the audience, was rhetorical and could not be pictorial. With the adoption of the proscenium arch, a change began to take place. The proscenium arch became a frame for a picture. With the successive improvements in physical equipment, especially in scenery and lighting, the stage became definitely pictorial. We were long in recognizing this change. But a study of our modern stage should convince us of its truth, and the director of today accepts its truth without question and proceeds with his work, bearing always in mind the idea of picture.

Several things follow naturally the development of the stage picture. Stage business assumes much greater importance. Some of our most striking dramatic moments are no longer the moments in which a character is making a pathetic or impassioned speech, but the moments in which he sits silent, reflective, before the light of a dying fire, or stands quiet and motionless with outstretched arms raised in appeal to the night sky. Illusion, also, follows the picture stage. Life on the stage may be presented in several ways—symbolically, romantically, realistically. The Elizabethan stage, lacking scenery and lighting, and surrounded by the audience, could not hope to give a realistic picture; the huge early 19th century

stage, in which the actor had to leave the proscenium arch and walk out upon the apron so that he could be sufficiently illuminated by the inadequate footlights to be clearly visible to the audience, could not maintain the illusion; but our picture stage has made the realistic presentation a reasonable presentation and has made illusion, both in acting and stagecraft, one of the supreme objects of the theatre workers.

Since the stage has become pictorial, it follows, therefore, that the principles of pictorial representation are applicable to it. Since illusion is sought for, the *actual* becomes the source and precedent; and certain stage conventions have developed which, being harmonious to the illusion, are accepted as natural. Of the principles of pictorial representation, the director is most concerned with the principles of design which affect the arrangement of his actors; of the stage conventions, he is interested in those relating to the business of his actors. To say that these matters are far-fetched or non-essential, is to deny the very obvious fact that the modern stage is pictorial and its presentations illusionistic.

(*a*) *The usefulness of design in direction*

Design denotes arrangement. Pictorial design is concerned with the arrangement of lines, masses,

and colors. Certain principles govern this arrangement, which we may designate as the principles of rhythm, balance, and harmony. As these principles of design will be referred to again and and again in this book, it is well that we define them once and for all.

By rhythm is meant related movement, or a "consistent relation and connection of parts that enable the eye to find its way through all the details of a design." Balance refers to emphasis; it demands that there shall be no undue emphasis, that those elements which war against the unity of the composition shall be eliminated. Harmony denotes fitness; it means that the elements shall fit together, that they shall seem to have something in common.

In the acted play we cannot separate scenery from actors; the two together compose the picture; but we can separate the work of director from that of art director and speak of those elements of design which are of importance to the director. It is seen that we at once eliminate the element of color, which does not apply to stage business.

As a general working principle we may say that the director shall arrange his lines and masses of actors in such a way that his stage picture shall possess rhythm, balance, and harmony.

How does rhythm apply? Perhaps we can

make this clear by several examples of arrangement. If the director places two figures at L., bowing low before a fireplace, a tall figure in the doorway L. C. with his head upon his arm, and a fourth at a table R., with her head upon the table, and each figure facing L., he has obtained rhythm. But if he arranges several lines of actors upon his stage in a manner which does not carry the eye from one line to another, he has lost rhythm and has decreased the beauty and effectiveness of his picture. These two cases may be expressed diagrammatically:

Rhythm does not demand parallelism or repetition; it is obtained whenever the lines show a related movement.

Balance refers to emphasis. The balancing of one mass of actors against another is of importance to the director, and forms one of his interesting preliminary problems. In working for balance, he may divide his stage in halves by a line running from the footlights to the back wall, and balance a group on one side by a group on the

other; but let him remember as he does so, that the repetition of a mass in area and shape will produce symmetry which in ordinary cases is not dramatic. In balancing his two sides, values as well as area must be taken into account. For instance, a character of strong will and great personality may balance a mob of uncharacterized people. So also will one figure in brilliant costume balance a group of people who are dressed quietly. (In this instance, as in so many others, the work of director and art director flow together.) It is not necessary for the director to draw a line from side to side across his stage and balance the space towards the footlights with the space near the back wall. Balance need not be maintained between these spaces, though in this case also it cannot be entirely ignored. A floor plan of the stage or a stage model is of much value to the director in working out his stage balances.

We have said that the third principle is harmony and that harmony denotes fitness. A sense of harmony is a part of the equipment of the director. Harmony may be lost when the shapes of the units are not considered in relation to the background, as when the actors form a rounded mass in bad relation to a tall, rectangular window; it may be lost when the type or genre of the play is disregarded in working out the stage business, as when farcical movement or grouping is inserted in

a straight comedy, or when movement or business appropriate to romantic drama is devised for a realistic play.

As we seek to apply these principles, let us not lose sight of the fact that rhythm, balance, and harmony in stage business are affected by the design of the scenery and the lighting arrangement, and are governed by the spirit and mood of the play. It is conceivable that the spirit may demand a lack of rhythm or balance, even of harmony. The point is that the director should be conscious of his use or non-use of these principles.

It may not be out of place to suggest other points in pictorial composition which will prove helpful to the director. As there is a dominant idea in a picture, so there should be a dominant idea in the stage picture, and all others should be subordinate to it. As there is an æsthetic center in a picture, so there is an æsthetic center in the stage picture. In a picture this point is to the left and above the actual center; in the stage picture it is relatively the same, though not so high. This point naturally draws attention to itself. An actor or a group near this point is emphasized by its very position. As the spaces of least interest in a picture are found near the frame, so the spaces of least interest in the stage picture are at the sides of the stage. The director, therefore,

should beware of groupings too far distant from the center of interest.

Lastly, we would call attention to lines. Lines are definitely suggestive. The upright line suggests dignity, strength, or spirituality; the horizontal line suggests serenity, repose, or weakness; the diagonal line suggests instability, change, motion. The director can make use of this suggestibility in his stage pictures. By having a group with its hands raised high, or one actor, standing aloft, with his arms extended upward, he suggests one idea; by having a group reclining on the floor, he suggests another; and by having a group upon a flight of stairs which mount toward the wings, he suggests still another.

This sketchy discussion may serve to open up the possibilities of design to the director, who will find in the mastery of its principles much that is useful in his problem of working out stage business.

(*b*) *Stage conventions—those to be observed and those to be disregarded*

What relation have stage conventions to stage business? To begin with, let us remember that certain conventional stage customs and matters of business are always accepted as logical and right at a given period. In an Elizabethan theatre,

when an actor announced that it was midnight, and later that "light thickens, and the crow takes wing to the rocky wood," although the sun shone down on the actor all the time, the audience was not disturbed. They accepted and believed the actor's words about darkness and dawn. In the Chinese theatre, when a man comes on the stage wearing a red mask or in red make-up, convention decrees that the audience shall see in him, without further explanation, an upright man. We have never evolved a perfect stage; it is never as *actual* as the actors and the dialogue; therefore certain artifices, devices, customs, certain conventional ways of doing things, become necessary.

Our own stage is not free from such conventions. We attempt to create an illusion, but the illusion is not perfect. In connection with our stage, we find conventions which are accepted as right, even if they do not, in reality, assist in the illusion. We have the convention of a glare of light coming from the actors' feet—a convention which does not contribute to the illusion of lifelikeness. We have the convention of a small space (being limited as we are by the size of our stage) even when the actual space we are supposed to represent is a thousand times as great. We have the convention of watching our plays over the bobbing heads of the orchestra, and many others which would be disturbing to a newcomer in our theatre. Also,

we have a number of conventions which affect our acting, such as the arrangement of furniture, and the way in which an actor shall cross, turn, and stand.

We have to accept the fact that certain conventions are necessary. How, we may ask, are we to know which are necessary and which are not? Our answer to this is: Those conventions which are a definite part of the illusion, whose removal would disturb the illusion and break the spell of "make-believe," should be kept; all others, under proper conditions, can be dispensed with.

So we find here something else that is of interest to the director when he plans his stage business. He is aware that the usual stage business is prescribed, trite, and uninteresting. He desires something fresh, something which will arrest attention. So he considers the acting conventions and decides upon those which can be discarded without disturbing the illusion. Why, he questions, should not an actor stand with his back to the audience? People do not always face us when they are speaking, and, besides, backs are expressive of emotion. Why should an actor in turning always turn *toward* the audience? Why may not an actor, under certain circumstances, make an entrance while another actor is talking? Why should a table always be center stage? Why should a fireplace always be lighted, and always cast a blood-

red glow? Why must the chairs be so arranged that the actors, when sitting, are always facing or in profile to the audience? If the director thinks of these and similar questions, he will discover a number of business conventions which may be disregarded; and he will find that in disregarding them his new business will possess freshness and greater naturalness.

But some conventions must be observed. For instance, there is the delicate matter of the fourth wall of the stage which has been taken down so that we can see the play. In "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" a fireplace down stage, center, was suggested by fender, fire set, and the red glow. We were immediately made conscious of the fourth wall. The illusion was disturbed. More harm than good resulted from the non-observance of this convention. Again, a director should not attempt to break with the convention of movement on the stage. In a play there is a more or less constant shift of actors from one position to another, whereas in actual life we sometimes sit for long periods of time without moving; yet if we simulate actual conditions and eliminate movement, we not only destroy a convention which aids the illusion, but we lose in effectiveness; our play becomes slow and monotonous.

So we conclude that in a study of both design and convention the director finds much which will

be of use to him in planning his stage business. Good design means beauty and dramatic effectiveness; the non-observance of certain conventions yields effectiveness and freshness.

(E) REHEARSALS

It is in the matter of conducting rehearsals that the director meets his supreme test; here he assumes sole responsibility and despotic rule; here he becomes teacher and critic, sympathetic friend and slave-driver; here all his intelligence, energy, and enthusiasm are called into service.

(*a*) *Methods and suggestions*

Temperament dictates an individual method for each director; cast, play, and circumstances vary this method. Though rehearsals are so much a matter of the personal equation and circumstances, it may not be amiss to state certain practices which have proved advantageous and to suggest an order which has been found serviceable.

First, the director as well as the actor must recognize that in the rehearsal period nothing should be done which can be done in private or outside this period. It is not a time to study the play or work out business for the actors; neither is it the time for actors to memorize their lines.

The director needs every minute for building up those parts of the production which cannot be attended to at any other time.

Second, he should have a definite course in mind, which begins with the first and culminates in the final rehearsal. He should know, approximately, how long he will spend on each act, how many rehearsals will be possible, when he must demand that the actors lay aside their scripts, when he must begin "tightening" the play. He will allow more time for the rehearsal of the first act than for the others, for while working with this act the actors will be getting into their characters.

Third, he must early appoint a prompter and see that the person holding this lowly but important office is entirely familiar with the play and with both its action and its pauses by the time of the dress rehearsals. And he must have his property man ready with the hand properties as soon as the actors are line-perfect.

Fourth, he should be a disciplinarian. Just how he shall enforce discipline is again determined by his temperament, but in his own way he must impress upon his actors that the stage or rehearsal room is a workshop, not a playground.

And lastly, the director should have the confidence of his actors. Shall he storm and scold? Shall he be hard on them? Isn't it better to use smooth ways and a quiet voice? These ques-

tions are unimportant. He may conduct his rehearsals in any way compatible with his own temperament, provided he gets on with people and has the confidence of his players. Once they lose confidence in him, his noise or silence, pleading or anger will avail but little.

The experienced director finds that the three or four weeks of rehearsal fall into rather definite periods, for the purpose of the rehearsal is now to accompiish one thing and again to accomplish something else. There may be difference of opinion about these periods, but for the purpose of explanation they may be divided as follows:

The first period comprises the uninspired days during which the main business is blocked out, and the actors, while becoming familiar with the play, learn their general movement about the stage. These rehearsals to be thorough, must move slowly. The actor should write into his script the business as it is given to him so this part of the work will not have to be repeated and so he can memorize the business as he memorizes the lines. When rehearsing a one-act play this period ordinarily occupies two rehearsals; when a long play, enough rehearsals to cover the entire play twice.

The second period includes the perfecting of business, the memorizing of lines, and the attempts of the actors to feel and impersonate the characters. During this period, which is the longest,

the play should begin to take form. The director should be a guide and a teacher. He should instruct, suggest, direct. He should assist the actor in overcoming his restlessness and make him see that any movement which does not actually help the action of the play, hinders it. He should let him try in numerous ways to feel and live his character. And throughout, he should be as patient as Job. This period, when a long play is being rehearsed, occupies ten days or two weeks. By the end of two weeks the actors should be line-perfect.

Then follows a period, overlapping the second, in which the characterizations are perfected. The director should begin to demand more of his people now. Perhaps he will find a few private rehearsals on the more difficult characters necessary. And as the characters begin to breathe and live, he should begin to bring the separate characters together into an ensemble; he should place each character in its proper relation to the rest of the play, and work for reaction of character to character. His task during this period —a period frequently overlooked by amateurs— calls for the utmost concentration and intelligence. An experienced director often finds his work during these days the most stimulating in the whole realm of directing.

Finally comes the period of whipping the play

into shape, of tightening the scenes, of building up and bringing out the drama. This period cannot extend over many days, a week at the most. During these days the director works at white heat. Character and business having been disposed of, tempo, emphasis, pause, climax, are taken up. Energy is unflagging and enthusiasm is high. Interest must not drop. The actors must be emotionalized; they must now *feel* the play and *feel* the drama in the play. This period often decides whether the play, even though it be well acted and well staged, will be slow, jerky, or monotonous (as amateur plays frequently are) or whether it will possess variety and color, movement, emotional power, and climax. This period is the most exhaustive of all; it is the period which, if thoroughly and effectively handled, will raise the performance from the amateur class into the class of the non-professional.

Over how long a time should these four periods extend? No full length play can be satisfactorily produced with less than three weeks' work, reckoning a rehearsal for each day except Sundays. On the other hand, the rehearsals cannot safely be extended much beyond four weeks because the amateur usually has got the technique, patience, and physical energy to continue growing in the play longer than this time. He will become stale and will begin to lose a spontaneity and natural-

ness which he has manifested earlier. As for individual rehearsals, two hours are ordinarily sufficient. A longer rehearsal tends to drag and depress rather than to build up the play. Whether a long stretch of the play should be rehearsed or whether the director should proceed an inch at a time is dependent, naturally, upon what the rehearsal is meant to accomplish. During the second period it is advisable, or rather it is necessary, to move very slowly, working out accurately the details of business, characterization, and interpretation of lines. The director, as he watches a rehearsal, will be aware when his cast is growing restless over this microscopic work and will let them go through an entire scene without interruption.

Finally, we are ready for dress rehearsals. These include rehearsals of scenery, lights, properties, costumes, and make-up. The chief things to be determined now are, not only that the stage is in complete readiness, but that the entire play can move, uninterruptedly, from curtain to curtain. There should be two dress rehearsals: a stage rehearsal in which lights and scenery are tested, and a costume and make-up rehearsal for the cast. A good plan is to give over the first rehearsal to the art director and allow the director the final rehearsal for his actors. As we have emphasized before, if the

organization of the staff has been what it should be, and if its members have done their work, the final rehearsal should not drag through four or six hours of agony. Certainly the actor's nervousness and irritability should not be increased by his having to wait upon the electrician while he tinkers with the lights or upon the stage crew while they experiment with the scenery.

Despite the best laid plans, enough things will go wrong at final rehearsals. A director should bend every effort toward keeping these errors and interruptions down to the minimum.

(*b*) *Unity, emphasis, and tempo*

Before we proceed to the night of the performance, we would pause for a moment to call attention to the importance of unity, emphasis, and tempo.

We have spoken several times of the unity of the production. The play, if it is a good play, possesses unity. The director should work toward a unity in his production, toward "an organic fusion of movement, light, sound, and stage decoration" which will express the unity of the play. The actor is at the heart of his problem of unity. A production cannot be unified if the actors are now playing farce and now playing melodrama. Something above and

beyond everything else should dominate and govern the entire work, giving it unity—should dictate the organic fusion. This may be an atmosphere, a characterization, an idea, a situation. Whatever it is the director should be able to discover it in the play and keep it before his actors during rehearsals.

One can emphasize "The Merchant of Venice" so that Shylock appeals to us as either comic, sympathetic, or villainous. It must be admitted that it is not easy to determine from his drawing of the Jew the exact emphasis which Shakespere wanted. Most plays, however, call for a specific emphasis which will illuminate certain aspects of the play. Forbes-Robertson so emphasized his characterization of Hamlet that he aided his audience greatly in understanding certain aspects of the character. Emphasis grows from a viewpoint which the director takes toward the play. Occasionally, however, the director seems to have had no viewpoint. Then the production possesses no emphasis and the audience must puzzle over certain points, interpreting them now this way and now that. The director may gain emphasis by the employment of such elements as tempo, movement, pause, and loudness and softness of speech.

Tempo means that the movement and speech proceed *adagio*, *moderato*, or *allegro*. Tempo

has a dramatic value in itself, it is as suggestive as the line which we discussed under design. A slow tempo suggests sadness, seriousness, or profundity; a quick tempo suggests lightness, vivacity, or humor. A slow-paced farce will tend to become gloomy no matter how many witty lines and comical scenes it contains. Synge's "Riders to the Sea" played in a fast tempo would be inharmonious and grotesque. Most amateur plays err on the side of slowness of tempo rather than rapidity. The meaning of both tempo and emphasis may become clearer if the director applies them first to music and then thinks of them in relation to his own art.

The beginning director may feel that there are more important and practical matters for him to consider than unity, emphasis, and tempo in connection with his rehearsals. He may be right. But let him not forget about them. If he feels that he is not ready for them, let him store them away for future study.

(f) THE NIGHT OF THE PERFORMANCE

No actor is at his best when he is physically exhausted. The last week of rehearsals, culminating in the dress rehearsals, is exhausting in the extreme. To hold a dress rehearsal on the day

of the play is preposterous. The final rehearsal should come twenty-four, or forty-eight hours, if possible, before the play is to be given. This "breathing spell" will give the actors time to recuperate physically and will put them on edge for the performance; they will have had time to think about the play and to "get keyed up," but will not be forced to rely upon their reserve strength (which occasionally fails them) to carry them through the performance.

The director has *his* rôle to play on the night of the performance. No actor is in a spirit to give his best if he walks on the stage with the naggings and admonitions of a pessimistic director ringing in his ears. On the night of the performance the wise director will issue no last minute instructions, will make no nervous speeches to his players, reminding them of the crisis they are facing. He will be self-controlled, good-humored, and light-hearted. True, he cannot keep his actors' minds off the play; but every remark will be turned off lightly. He will have a good time. He might as well be happy, for if he has not succeeded in preparing his production for the public during his month of intensive work, he cannot expect to transform an unfinished job into a triumph during these last minutes. A ridiculous comment on a certain line is now worth

more than a serious discussion of it; a laugh in the heart of the actor is now worth more to the success of the play than a fear.

If the director has done his work well and if he has been a good disciplinarian, he can relinquish the rôle of dictator on this night and become a comrade. The actors should feel a sense of freedom and ease. Giving the play should be a pleasure, a happy and helpful experience.

4. The Relation of Director to Actor and Art Director

The relationship of actor and director has already been suggested. Whatever demands the director makes, whatever discipline he may find it necessary to enforce, sense and tact should govern him at all times. Authority he must have; discipline he must enforce; on the other hand, he must inspire his actors with respect for and confidence in themselves; he must make them believe in themselves even while he is telling them that they are impossible! How can he do this? There is no answer to the question. But it may be found, for him, somewhere within his own unique personality, or the clue may be discovered in the preceding comments on the prerequisites of the director.

Since interest has increased in stagecraft, the

art director has risen in importance. Not uncommonly does he assume, or aspire to, an importance above that of the director himself. Now it is quite possible to imagine the production of a play in which the spectacle, combining scenic, lighting, and costume display, is the important thing; in which drama and acting are subordinated to picture. In such a production the art director is justified in assuming a dictatorship which extends over that of the director himself. But in the majority of cases the director must be the despot and the art director must bow to his will. This is desirable for at least two reasons. First, the art director is seldom as interested in the human element of the play, that is in the actors, as he is in that part of the production which he can create with his own hands. And in the second place, he but rarely conceives of the play as an illusion of life; he is more concerned with the opportunities which it affords him, as an artist.

Let it not be inferred that there must be rivalry or clash between the two directors; they may, and usually do, work together in harmony, each being willing to give in on a point here and there, and each at times finding that a compromise is of value to both. Likewise, there is no desire here to be unfair to the art director; he will be given his innings in a later chapter. But the director must be warned that he may have to defend himself

and his actors from the often beautiful and interesting scenery and lighting of his artistic coworker.

5. The Aim of Non-Professional Production

Non-professional drama has evolved to a position of authority and must accept the responsibility which accompanies its authority. It has enticed into its audience musicians, painters, architects, and speakers—artists who have found their own arts not mutilated or disregarded on its stage, but employed lovingly and intelligently; and towards these artists the director must feel the responsibility of using their arts with care and dignity. It has also brought into its audience business and professional men and women, and laborers, who have been told of an amusement different from the amusement to be found in the picture and vaudeville houses; and towards these people the director must accept an entertainment responsibility. It has brought into its audience educators who have discovered in the acted drama an educative force, supplementing and vivifying the work of the class room; and towards the educators the director must feel an educational responsibility. It has brought into its audience men and women who have found in the play a social and ethical force, a force which can be utilized

in civic and social betterment; and towards these people the director has a social responsibility. So we might continue.

Non-professional drama has not evolved because of a belief in its responsibility nor through any desire to assume responsibility; it has developed because the theatre is the great play house of mankind, and in the theatre man finds an outlet for his emotional life, and an opportunity to satisfy his instinct for mimicry and his desire for creation; it has developed because man has rediscovered that the theatre is not the sole property of a group of haughty professional workers to whom he must pay toll for entrance into their house of magic, but is his own property, and in it he is free to have as joyous a time, recreating the experiences of life, as he can have doing anything else under the sun. And from his enthusiasm and his joy in creation, the movement has grown. As he has lived in his playhouse year after year his pleasure has gone deeper, his accomplishment has grown finer, until he has assembled little groups of his intelligent fellowmen about him who are eager to share in his joy, who are eager to find in the theatre the new delights with which he has made them acquainted.

So, we repeat, the non-professional finds himself in a position of authority and responsibility. In former years his purpose might be nothing at

all, his goal the presentation of a commonplace play in a haphazard manner; but now his purpose must be at least so high that he will not disappoint the audience which he is gradually drawing into his theatre.

If, as many contend, a National American Theatre must have its birth in our non-professional drama, then his aim should be to contribute, in some way, to that birth. If his efforts result in nothing but a more defiant challenge to the professional theatre, a challenge which will bring about a higher standard in the professional theatre, he must strive to contribute towards this desirable change. His position of responsibility requires, or at least requests, that he bend his efforts towards some definite contribution to drama; that he do not tear down nor detract from the fine work which has already been accomplished.

Now within this general aim of "contribution" lie many definite aims,—and one which will adapt itself to his talents and the community. Kipling says of tribal lays:

"There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays
And every single one of them is right."

The quotation is applicable to the art of non-professional drama. Shall he aim at providing

wholesome amusement? Shall he offer his audience the masterpieces of dramaturgy for their education and deeper pleasure? Shall he arouse enthusiasm among the writers of his community, urging them to crystallize dramatically the local scene, and presenting their efforts upon his stage? Shall he strive to make his stage a temple of living beauty? Each aim is good; each will seek to raise the general level of non-professional drama; each may be constructive. He cannot move toward all the goals; he cannot please everyone; he must concentrate his efforts. Let him discover his responsibility toward his own people, and endeavor to meet that responsibility if it is within his talents to do so.

Such a discussion does not take into account the plays which have to be given for charity or to entertain friends or because "we have to get up a program." Nothing can be said about these plays. They have their place in the scheme of things. But the line of demarcation is becoming bolder between these amateur theatricals and the artistic, sincere production of the non-professionals. As time goes on, the separation will become complete, and as wide a gap will exist between them as existed between the amateur plays and the plays of the professional theatre of a half century ago.

CHAPTER V

PRODUCTION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE ART DIRECTOR

1. The Art Director and His Place in the Production

The most interesting, and perhaps the most important, books on the theatre which have been written in America since the advent of the little theatres, have been written, not about the art of acting nor about directing nor about the important plays which have been produced, but about the stage. They are filled with enthusiasm and prophecy for the mechanical and artistic forces which, since their reunion upon the stage, have made of the theatre a convenient place for an association of all the arts. The continued interest in stagecraft suggests the importance it has assumed among us.

When he began his work, the non-professional saw that he had no library of plays of his own comparable to that of the professional theatre, and no actors of training and technique who could compete with professional actors; but he found

the professionals applying a stagecraft which was antiquated, insufficient, unimaginative, and here he saw his opening. The stage was lighted by "foots" and "borders" supplemented occasionally by an unreal "spot" for emphasis and climax. The sets of the metropolitan theatres were conventional, precise, and literal; they represented rather than suggested a real room, and everything which was to be found in a real room was crowded upon the stage. The sets of the small town and school theatres were bad imitations of those of the city theatres; they were made up of drops and wings, clumsily painted in inharmonious colors.

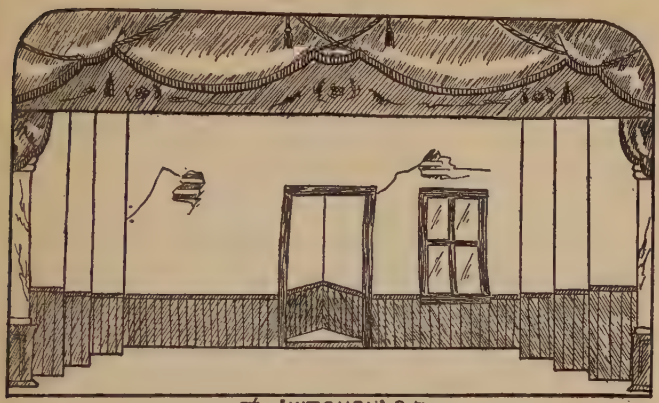
When there was design it was conventional; color was used for representation. The common attitude took no account of the fact that various arts could be used consciously in the scheme of a production, creating its mood and heightening its effect; these arts and forces were merely accessories which were occasionally valuable in and of themselves and which served as a negative, and at times a disturbing, background to the actor's work.

There are two causes apparent for the non-professional's enthusiastic experimentation in stagecraft. He saw first, that in his staging he could hope to compete with the staging of the professional theatre, and second, that, since he desired to work in stagecraft, he must find new

methods and less expensive devices, for there was a wolf at the door of his theatre—the wolf of financial stringency—which prevented him from staging plays in the expensive manner of the professional theatre. He neither wanted to imitate the professional theatre, nor could he have done so if he had wanted to.

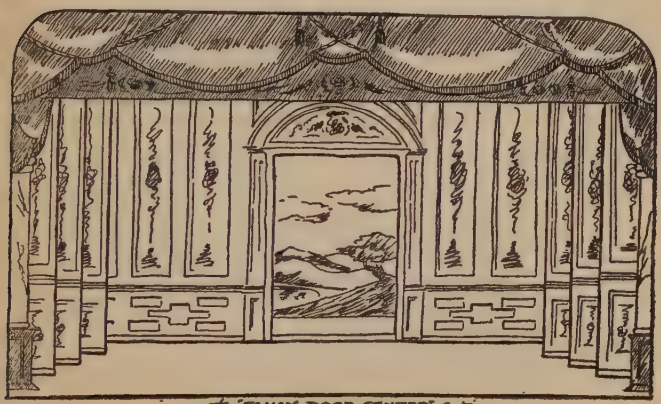
The "WOODS" or "GARDEN" Set

Now in order to devise new staging he had to have intelligence and imagination. These were not acquired at once. But they came. After a decade of experimentation the non-professional theatre found among its membership a number of ingenious workers who were genuine craftsmen, men and women who were devising settings which were remarkable in their simplicity, their artistry, their dramatic effectiveness. The professional



The "KITCHEN" Set

theatre worker took notice. The non-professional had demonstrated to him what light and color and simplicity of design, plus ingenuity, can do to vivify and augment the play, and he asked the



The "FANCY DOOR-CENTER" Set

non-professional artists to step into his own theatre and beautify his stage.

Because of the effective staging he has devised, and because of the influence and honor he has brought to the previously ignored amateur theatre, the art director has become the most prominent individual working in the theatre. He is accorded a position of authority. His name appears on the programs and advertising, and his work is judged of equal importance with the work of the author and director. Whether or not his position of authority is justified, he has forced upon the non-professional theatre the responsibility of good staging.

His influence extends from center to circumference of amateur drama. Even the school amateur can no longer disregard the setting of his play; it must be adequate, it must be different, it must be beautiful. The school amateur knows something about design and the use of color, the purpose of costuming, and a dozen ways to secure effective lighting. His school audience, too, is aware of these things and expects them. So, not only must the amateur stage his plays in accordance with a high æsthetic standard if he wishes to compete with the professional theatre, but he must mount them carefully and beautifully if he wishes to compete with his own non-professional fellow-workmen. In non-professional drama there

is no field of activity so esteemed, so truly creative, and so filled with opportunity, as the field of art directing.

In many, perhaps in most, of our college theatres, the general director is still the art director; but his work is slowly and certainly becoming limited to a specific training of the cast and a general supervision of the production. Past developments point to the fact that the art director (whether he is called the scenic artist, stage manager, or something else, for his title is not yet fixed) is assuming a definite and important place in the work of non-professional production.

It is unwise to make dogmatic statements about an institution such as the present stage which is still in the process of evolution; and it is impossible to ascribe to the director of stagecraft absolute qualities; for the next season, or the next, may bring with it the discovery of new methods which will demand new talents of the director. However, by studying the first decade of the development which began just before the World War, we may distinguish several outstanding characteristics in this artist who has transformed our stages.

He possesses a sense of beauty. He was not the discoverer of beauty in stage art; that discovery must be accredited to the artists of the European experimental theatres. But he saw

the value and fitness of beauty on the stage, and the pleasure which beauty affords the spectator. As he experimented with beauty of line and color and mass, the very term changed its gender; it is no longer feminine or neuter; it is masculine, embracing the masculine qualities of strength and vitality and power.

He possesses imagination. The playwrights and actors had provided the stage workers with little to work upon. The plays did not allure the imagination; the actors were trained in the natural, which in this instance meant the realistic, school. But from abroad came accounts of marvelous scenic devices: of lighting equipment which could transform the stage into a bleak mountain top—atmospheric, misty, full of awe, yet charming; of revolving stages which permitted scenes to be changed without the long waits usually necessary. He read of how color was used to accentuate the moods and emotions of the play; how weariness, passion, hate, the mood of the church, of the barbaric court, of the brothel, of the angry sea were imparted to audiences through the use of color. He learned how costumes were used to stress pictorially an emotion or a dramatic meaning. He read of the work of such men as Craig, Urban, Bakst, Appia, and Reinhart. He added to his stage vocabulary such words as "stylisation" and "*kuppel-horizont.*"

The work being done on the foreign stages caught and held his imagination. He, too, longed to experiment; he wanted to tear down the three straight walls of his unimaginative interior set, and suggest a room which had a definite mood; he wanted to fill the corners of his room with masses of shadow, to do away with the glaring white light, to focus his light, to add another dimension to the flat lighting of his stage. The stage became the laboratory for his imagination. And many an artist who had had little or no interest in the stage, seeing these opportunities and the manner in which the director enjoyed them, deserted his easel and set to work upon the broader, three-dimensional canvas of the stage.

But the artist, in the early days, found himself handicapped in many ways. He had a small, inadequate, meagerly equipped stage; he had no fine lighting system and he could not hope to have one; his material was limited; he had no corps of able assistants to help him; and above all, he had no funds. Simplicity became his goal, and ingenuity his complete stock of tools. His imagination created many beautiful stage pictures, but it was his ingenuity which brought his imagined creations to life. Unbleached muslin, steel wool, radiator paint, incandescent light bulbs dipped in dye, strips of soft pine, water color paints, mosquito-netting: these and other cheap and easily

obtainable materials were converted by his ingenuity, guided by his imagination, into enchanted moonlit forests, crumbling old cottages looking out upon a waste of sea, office rooms which fairly breathed business and efficiency, dirty depressing hovels, and beautiful fairy-like palaces. The triumph of non-professional staging is the triumph of these enthusiastic artists and craftsmen gifted with a sense of beauty, an imagination, and an amazing ingenuity.

This modern stagecraft, possessing, as it surely does, qualities of permanency and dramatic worth, possesses also the shallow popularity of a novelty. The switchboard and the paint pots have become our newest theatrical playthings, and we are having such a good time with our new toys that we are in danger of giving them an importance greater than they merit. We must keep our heads in this matter of staging.

The art director has been admitted to the theatre and the dramatic world is happier now that he is there; but just as the star, taking the center of the stage in a bright "spot" and bellowing forth his speeches while the remainder of the cast retreats to the back-stage shadows, is assuming an unwarranted and unreasonable importance, so the art director, when he asks the actors to "play up to" his scenery, or when he designs settings and devises effects which are startling in

themselves but which detract from the play, is over-stepping the bounds of his position. The art director must fit into the scheme of the production and must not take advantage of his popularity.

We cried down the staging of a past generation as bad staging. But modern scenery which takes our attention away from the play is bad scenery; lighting which directs our interest to blue light fading into violet and violet into crimson is wrong lighting. The work of the art director must not stand by itself; it should be a part of the unified whole, occupying so much prominence and no more. Unless we understand the function of stagecraft and recognize its dangers, we cannot use it intelligently. Let us, therefore, keep in mind as we proceed that the art director's work has a true dramatic value only when it is in harmony with the other arts and is subservient to the production as a whole.

2. The Departments of Stagecraft

Modern stagecraft includes the designing, construction, and painting of scenery; the devising of lighting effects and the arrangement and manipulation of lights; the designing and making of costumes; the assembling or making of properties; and the devising and construction of mechanical stage devices. How fortunate the

non-professional theatres would be if they had at their disposal an expert electrician, a stage architect, a talented painter, a clever costume designer, and an ingenious mechanic! But most of them have not and never will have. Happily all of these experts are not essential to a creditable production. Since it is possible easily to acquire a working knowledge of the various units of stagecraft and since simplicity is the goal of the production, a great deal of the staging can be accomplished through the natural stage ability and the acquired training of one or two people. Usually all of the staging is under the supervision of one trained man whom we have designated the art director.

Shall the art director be a skilled artist? Not necessarily, if we mean by that a clever draftsman and a good easel artist. But he should have a sound artistic perception. Either through training or through a natural artistic sense he must be able to create, even if only in the simplest terms, with the authority of an artist. It is expected that he will be able to use the hammer and brush, mix the dye pots, and operate the switchboard; but if he cannot do these things himself, he should be able to tell those who can do them exactly what he wants done, and why.

Shall the art director be a trained man? To an extent, yes. He should know something of

the theory and history of design, color, and light, something about textures and pigments, before he can make his settings "come out right," and such knowledge is not instinctive but acquired.

What are the functions of each department of his work? Both modern taste and lack of funds decree that the scenery shall be simple and artistic, suggestive rather than representational; that it shall provide a beautiful and harmonious background for the action and suggest, in some simple or subtle way, the spirit of the play. The lighting should be arranged with a view to naturalness; that is, it should not be clever or theatrical or migratory, as it is when the vaudeville spotlight is used; it should seem to come from a natural source, and should be so arranged that the actors are now in shadow and now in light, thus presenting to the audience the relief of sculpture rather than the flat surface of a poster. Costumes should be adapted to the spirit of the play and should suggest its mood; when they do more than this they are usurping an importance which is not rightfully their own. Properties should be not merely properties—neutral places of rest or action for the actors; they should likewise be a part of the play and should suggest the atmosphere of the play. Mechanical devices share in the same general function. But mechanical devices should be employed sparingly. Only when

the action demands it should a snowstorm be visible to the audience. Here, as with scenery, it is better to suggest than to represent. The imagination of the spectator can produce a better snowstorm than the most ingenious mechanic, once the idea is suggested to him, and besides, he will have a much better time if he has to do it for himself.

These, then, are the departments of the work of stagecraft with their general functions, which, it is seen, are the same function in each case. As the director takes his human material and guides it toward one end, so the art director takes his material and uses it to express dramatically and beautifully the mood of the play. The art director is not only supervisor and director, he is usually the actual carpenter, painter, and mechanic as well. For simplicity of explanation we shall treat each department of the work separately as though under the charge of individual workmen.

3. Stage Terms Explained

Before we take up the work of different departments, we had better make sure that we are familiar with the vocabulary of the stage. Many terms have found their way into ordinary con-

versation, but others are still peculiar to the stage and its arts.

As the front curtain rises, we notice the *tormentors*, which are pieces of scenery on each side of the front of the stage, extending to, and hiding from, the audience the front edge of any scenery which comes within the opening of the proscenium arch; and the *teaser*, which is a piece of scenery suspended from the flies and extending below the top of the proscenium opening in order to mask from the audience the light borders, sky borders, and the front edge of the ceiling.

We see that a *box set* is upon the stage. The *box set* is what the name suggests, a box, and it extends back from each side of the proscenium arch, giving a perfect illusion of the three sides of a room. The box set is composed of a number of units called *flats*, which are wooden frames covered with cloth and joined together. The flats are joined together and secured firmly by means of ropes called *lash lines*. Above the set is the *ceiling*, a cloth-covered frame, hinged in the center, operating upon ropes which raise it or lower it until it rests upon the top of the flats. When a ceiling is not used, as in an outdoor set, *sky borders*—strips of scenery extending across the width of the stage and fastened to *battens*—

are dropped down to mask the files and the tops of the drops or flats from the audience. The *battens* are the strips of wood upon which borders and drops are fastened.

In the background we find a *drop*, a *cut-out*, or a *cyclorama*. *Drop* is the term sometimes applied to the front curtain; but *a drop* usually refers to a large piece of scenery, hanging free, which can be raised or lowered; when lowered, it generally extends across the width of the stage. Perhaps in place of a drop there is a *cyclorama*, which is a piece of scenery semi-circular in shape, painted a sky color and extending the width of the stage. The cyclorama is excellent for giving the illusion of out-of-doors distance. Both sky drops and cyclorama are of sufficient height, when lowered, to meet the sky borders. Since it is not practicable to paint the drop or cyclorama for every scene, we find the *cut-out* serviceable. A *cut-out* is a piece of scenery, representing a landscape, terrace wall, formal garden, row of houses, or anything else which may appear in the middle distance; it is usually painted on composition board, cut out, and placed before the sky drop or cyclorama.

We now examine the lights. We note several inverted troughs of lights suspended above the stage. These are the *light borders*, the one nearest the proscenium being known as the *con-*

cert border. Near the switchboard are the *dimmers*, which are devices containing a reactive or choking coil used for adjusting current in the incandescent lamps, thus regulating the amount of light in the footlights, borders, or spots to any degree desired. The *spotlight* consists of a lamp whose light passes through a condensing lens, thus concentrating the light on a small space. The *flood light* is a group of lamps or one strong lamp in a box, but containing no lens, which results in a greater diffusion of light than can be secured with a spotlight.

These are the common terms. There are a few uncommon terms which we will have little or no use for, and a number of slang expressions which serve no need. With an understanding of the terms which have been explained we can proceed to a study of the various departments of stagecraft.

4. The Art Director's Assistants

a. the scenic artist.

Let it be repeated once more: the mission of the setting is not to display a beautiful or ugly or bizarre picture but to express the play and intensify its mood; it is not a work apart from the play but a unit within it. In fulfilling its mission

modern scenery gives us an illusion of something; and this should be, not an illusion of a stage, but an illusion that the stage has disappeared and we are somewhere else. (This idea gives us a clew to stagey, theatrical scenery on the one hand, and to dramatic scenery on the other.) Certainly the first task of the scenic artist is to convince himself of the mission of scenery, and his second to focus his attention upon the illusion his scenery is to give.

These things being done, the artist must clear his mind on the principles and practices of design; he must have a conception of what design is and of its function in the scenic scheme; he must have an understanding of color and of the uses to which it may be put upon the stage.

(*a*) *Design and the scenic artist*

We have said that design denotes arrangement; that the arrangement embraces the elements of line, mass, and color; that certain principles govern the arrangement of these elements: the principle of rhythm which denotes related movement, of balance which refers to emphasis, and of harmony which suggests fitness. And we may set down as a general principle for the scenic artist the same that we set down for the director: that he shall arrange his lines, masses, and colors

in a manner which will give his scene rhythm, balance, and harmony.

The elements in the director's design are the actors; those in the scenic artist's pictorial design are found in nature and architecture. Walls, windows, pillars, steps, trees, hedges, hills—these are some of the sources to which he goes for his design. In them he finds lines: curved and straight, long and short, horizontal, vertical and diagonal; and his lines have the same suggestion and symbolism in his case that they have in the case of the director. In his materials he also finds masses: large and small, solid and light, and varying in shape. The mass is likewise suggestive, and is of even more dramatic importance than the line; for from the color, size, the shape of the mass we may receive a variety of impressions: strength may be suggested, or awe, beauty, repose, ugliness. Lastly, his materials yield him colors: beautiful colors and ugly, warm and cold, luminous and dead.

The author's description suggests the scene. From lines, masses and colors, the artist creates its design. But he is not the free creative agent that the easel artist is. He is bound by the mood of the play and cannot allow a personal mood to dictate the picture. His frame is already waiting for him in the proscenium arch, and he must adjust his picture to the frame and cannot adjust

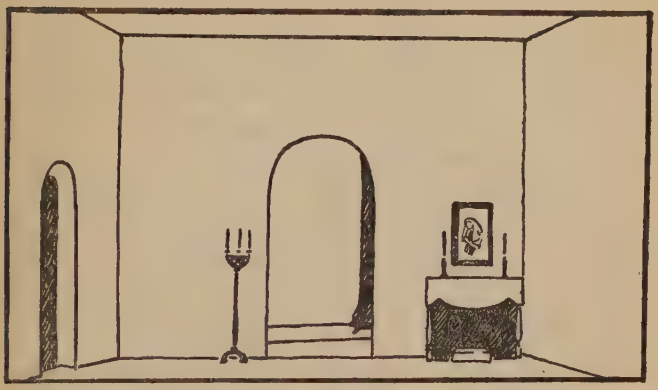
the frame to his picture. Finally, his design must take into account the movement of the actors.

Although the scenic artist concerns himself with the three elements: line, mass, and color, for simplicity of study we shall take up line and mass first, and devote a separate discussion to the element of color.

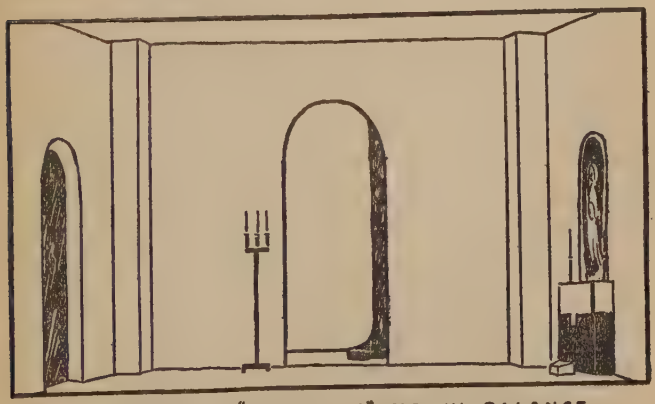
We need not concern ourselves with rhythm in line and mass. The arrangement of the lines of doors and windows, of the lines in a landscape, of the masses of trees in the background, may and should possess rhythm; but such stage rhythms are difficult of discussion, and a discussion may only succeed in puzzling the beginning scenic artist. All we would advise is that the artist confine himself to repetition and simplicity in the matter of rhythm.

Balance is of greater significance to him. The design should maintain a balance of lines, masses, interests, and colors. At times the artist is justified in objecting vigorously to carrying out the author's idea of the setting if the author has disregarded balance in his conception of it. His design cannot possess balance if the artist places a large doorway L., a window L. back, and a table L. C., and leaves for the right side of the room a small door and some light furniture. His openings must balance. So must his wall spaces. A

door which is too large will be too prominent, one which is too small will be insignificant; and the same is true of the wall spaces. A garden wall



UNITS OF A SET FOR KEMP'S "BOCCACCIO'S UNTOLD TALE" ARRANGED WITHOUT REFERENCE TO BALANCE



UNITS OF THE "BOCCACCIO" SET IN BALANCE

which is so high that only a narrow strip of sky is visible above it will not maintain a balance of mass or of interest. Again, he must remember that the symmetrical balance is undramatic. Many "don'ts" will occur to the reader without further enumeration. The artist may secure balance by blocking out his stage space and then adjusting his units, his openings, steps, trees, furniture, etc., to suit the space.

The question of harmony is not so troublesome. An arched door in a small room, a wide border in a low room, a medieval fireplace in a modern room, the combination of two architectural styles—each of these may destroy harmony. A door nine feet high and another seven feet with a small square window between them will destroy both harmony and balance. The sense of harmony is early developed and the designer soon comes to recognize when the elements of his design do not fit together.

Turning now from the principles of design to the kinds of design the artist may employ on the stage, we find, first, that his design may be representational; that is, he will set out to represent something which already exists. In this case his problem is one of imitation and adaptation. He arranges his elements: doors and windows or trees and hedges, in proper balance and in harmony with nature. Or, his design may be

purely decorative, in which instance he may use triangles, squares, rectangles, circles, ellipses, and other geometric figures—again subject to his governing principles. His design may even be highly suggestive of a mood. If his design is composed of the firm straight lines of a huge door set in an unrelieved wall mass and reached by a series of stone steps expressed in firm, unyielding horizontal lines, the design will suggest severity, calmness, and power. In each case the design should be æsthetically satisfying to the spectator; and it will be if it possesses rhythm, balance, and harmony.

The artist learns about design, not through experimentation which is costly and laborious, but through a study of the theory and practice of design. Through a knowledge of the principles of design (which, because of space limitations, we have only touched upon here) he will be able to apply the principles to his individual problems with a realization that their application will make his design "come out right." In working out his design he will find the stage model, which we shall take up later, very convenient.

(*b*) *Color and the scenic artist*

The subject of color as applied to stagecraft is more complex than the subject of line and mass.

We may approach the subject in four different ways. We may approach it through the color mediums which the stage artists employ: paint, light, and fabric color. We may approach it through its employment of the principles of design. We may approach it through its stage uses which embrace the representational, decorative, and symbolic. And we may approach it through a study of its peculiar properties and qualities which impart to it an undramatic interest or a dramatic effectiveness.

We may abandon our first approach temporarily, since we shall discuss light and fabrics under later headings, and confine ourselves to the last three approaches, beginning with the fourth, which leads us to a consideration of the qualities and properties of color.

Everyone is acquainted with the seven colors of the spectrum and their order of arrangement. Three of these: red, yellow, and blue, are called primary colors because they cannot be produced by mixing other colors. The others, or complementary colors, are produced by mixing two primary colors, the resulting color forming the complement of the third primary color. For example, we mix yellow and blue and obtain green, which is the complement of red. Now, a primary color and its complement always appear to best advantage when they are placed together. Red

is "reddest" when used with bluish-green; yellowish-green is most brilliant when placed beside violet. Conversely, colors which are not complements, as for instance red and violet, tend to destroy the brilliancy of each other, or, as we say, "kill" each other. Here, then, we find characteristics of color which the stage artist knows and finds useful.

Colors are possessed of the qualities of warmth and coldness. The hues at the blue end of the spectrum are colder than those at the red end. From an observation of the spectrum, we note the fact that primaries and their complements contrast in coldness and warmth; that blue is cold and its complement, orange, is warm; red is warm and its complement, green, is cold. We speak of colors as "warm" and "cold" because they have a physiological effect of warmth and coldness upon us. In this color quality the artist finds something very valuable to him in expressing the mood of the play.

Colors have at least two qualities: hue, or the color itself, and intensity or luminosity. Hue is that property of color which is its own, which distinguishes it from all other colors. Intensity refers to the amount of white mixed with the color; it grows more intense as the white disappears, until it reaches a point of highest intensity when it is "greenest" or "reddest." When colors are at

highest intensity, they are more emphatic and have a greater effect upon the sense of the spectator than when they are at half or quarter intensity.

One more point we may mention is that we may have various kinds of color schemes. We may have a monochromatic color scheme in which we use only different tones of the same color, a complementary color scheme, in which primaries and complements are used, thus providing contrast and emphasis, and an analogous color scheme in which a series of neighboring colors, such as yellow, yellow-green, and green, are used.

Bearing in mind these points concerning properties and qualities of colors, let us turn to design. May colors be arranged rhythmically? Most assuredly they may. The commonest example we might offer is the color chart in which related movement is evident as the eye travels from yellow through orange, red, violet, blue, green, and back to yellow again. We may also have a rhythm of red tones or blue tones or green tones. An analogous color scheme can hardly keep from possessing rhythm. Balance is frequently dependent upon color arrangement. All artists employ color balance. They secure balance in their design by contrasting warm colors with cold, by contrasting a small area of intense color with a larger area of color of half intensity. Color balance is as

essential to good design as line and mass balance. Color harmony is most important of all. We perceive color harmony more readily than we perceive line and mass harmony, and are usually instantly aware of a "clash" of colors. A knowledge of the properties and qualities of colors will help us to avoid a clash in our design.

We may have a monochromatic color scheme possessing rhythm, balance, and harmony, the balance being effected by contrasting light tones with dark. We may have an analogous color scheme subject to the same principles. In this scheme we may use, let us say, yellow, yellow-orange, and orange, and not only satisfy the artistic requirements, but also produce a very decided physiological effect on our audience. Again, we may have a complementary color scheme which is pleasing and interesting. Color, then, plays its important rôle in design.

Let us now look at the ways in which color is used on the stage. As with line and mass, it may be put to the three uses of representation, decoration, and symbolism. When used representationally it gives a painted likeness or reproduction of green grass, blue skies, gray walls. Now even the task of representation is not simple. We cannot examine a field, obtain the colors of the grass, trees, and flowers, and by matching these colors with pigments reproduce the color effect of the

field. Much more is necessary, for colors, when blended and seen from a distance under the influence of light, are very different from what they are when near at hand. When color is used decoratively it may form a design, an arrangement of hues, harmoniously placed, and pleasing to the eye. When used symbolically it utilizes the fact that some colors are warm, others cold, and that an emotional response is secured from an audience through an emphasis on the colors which suggest anger, coldness, calmness, passion, to the spectator.

A working knowledge of design and color application is not difficult to acquire. There are helpful books on these subjects in almost every library, and color charts are easily obtained. The enthusiastic amateur must not be discouraged if the knowledge suggested above is new or puzzling to him. If he wants to paint scenery, the chances are that he possesses some imagination and an artistic conscience which will direct, in simple matters, his judgment on design and color. Let him begin work; but at the same time, let him begin his study.

(*c*) *Kinds of scenery*

How shall he begin work? Theoretically, he should begin by deciding upon what kind of

scenery he is going to use. We say theoretically because ordinarily his stage is already equipped and the decision already made for him. But granted that he has the privilege of choice, he will find several kinds of scenery from which to choose.

First, there are drapes and screens. By *drapes* we mean a rectangle of heavy, dark cloth, cut here and there for openings, falling in folds, and enclosing the acting space of the stage. By *screens* we have reference to cloth-covered, wooden frames three or four feet wide by seven or eight feet high. With these two elements of drapes and screens, a suggestion of many types of setting may be secured with very little effort and time. For example, within the bare, dark drapes, which serve as a background, we may place a bench, pedestal, and a "Temple d'Amour," cut from composition board, and the setting for Dowson's "A Pierrot of the Minute" is complete. Or, with the same unrelieved background, supplemented by a rustic wall, benches, and seats, and perhaps, one or two conventional "set" trees, the setting for the first act of Rostand's "The Romantics" is suggested. For poetic and romantic plays, and for many of the classics of the Molière, Elizabethan, and Greek periods, the rectangle of drapes is often satisfactory, more satisfactory, in fact, than realistic sets.

With ten or a dozen burlap-covered screens

(tan, brown, or green are good colors) a variety of indoor sets can be suggested. The illusion will not be perfect, but with actual furniture and pictures and with careful lighting, the audience can frequently be made to see the room and not the screens. The screens may be set in front of the drapes which will form a dark background beyond them.

These drapes and screens make the simplest kind of scenery; and while they offer but little opportunity for experimentation, save in lighting and costuming, they have the advantages of simplicity and economy and are not without their power of suggestion and effectiveness.

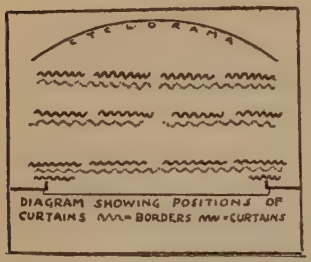
A kind of scenery growing out of the idea of drapes, but much more plastic, is found in the curtain set. With three lines of curtains and three lines of borders, augmented by curtain *tormentors* and half a dozen flats containing doors and windows and covered with cloth—save at the openings—exteriors and interiors of almost every type and shape can be adequately suggested. For this arrangement two curtains are hung behind the front curtain in the position of the tormentors; six wires are stretched across the stage from side to side, in pairs, and of sufficient height to be out of the range of vision of the audience; on a small stage the first pair of wires is stretched about five feet back of the front curtain, the second pair

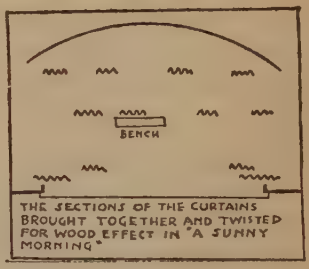
ten feet, the third fifteen; the front wire of each pair, will, in each case, carry the border, the rear wire the curtain; borders and curtains run freely along the wires by means of small rings; the curtains on each wire are of sufficient width to extend entirely across the proscenium opening, hanging in folds; that is, they are about twice the actual width of the opening; and the curtains, instead of being in one piece, are, for convenience, broken up into three or four. All curtains should be made of some soft gray material; cotton flannel is good. The adaptability of such a set may become more evident upon examination of the diagrams on the following page.

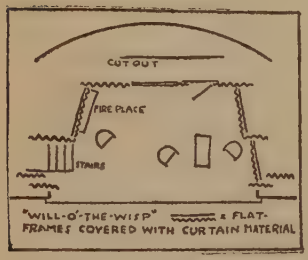
The adaptability of such a set reveals its extreme usefulness. The time spent in painting is eliminated, new settings may be devised at no expense whatsoever, and with an adequate lighting system and an ingenious art director, surprisingly interesting arrangements can be made,—arrangements which not only carry the essential elements required by the scene, but which in addition are poetic and atmospheric. A curtain set is especially useful in a school in which plays are constantly being given for instructional purposes.

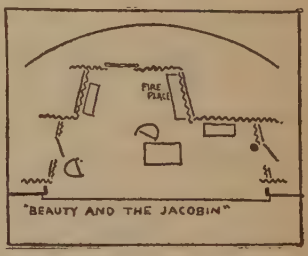
The drape set makes no pretense of being anything but a decorative background; the curtain set does more, suggesting the setting in almost everything except texture; the "permanent" or

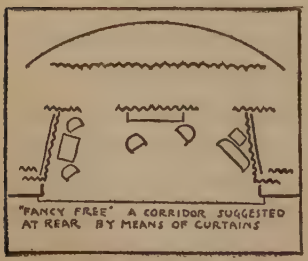
"convertible" set goes farther yet in suggestion and representation. This set is made up of flats, as is the ordinary box set. Heavy unbleached

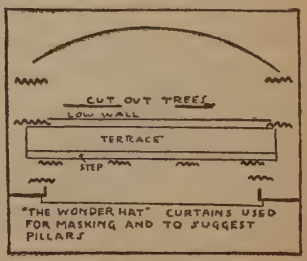












muslin is stretched over tall wooden frames and painted. Some of the frames are so built that doors and windows of varying shapes and sizes can be fitted into them. Besides the dozen or eighteen frames, there are pillars, steps, platforms, and a fireplace. The entire set may be painted a permanent neutral color. Some coarse fabric like sacking may be stretched over the muslin and painted a warm ecru. The rough texture of such a fabric will take the light better than the muslin, giving the walls more richness and vitality.

The various elements may, like those in the curtain set, be arranged in several ways to suggest rooms of a variety of shapes. The advantage in this set over the curtain set is that the walls do not move but have the appearance of solidity; the disadvantage is that the elements are not so easily and rapidly rearranged. Another disadvantage (which by some may be looked upon as an advantage) is that the flat, painted surfaces suggest to the painter the possibility for repainting, and he frequently takes the suggestion.

The curtain and permanent sets may be used in combination, though many people object to sets which appear to be partly solid wall and partly curtain.

Another kind of setting, closely allied to the permanent setting, is the skeleton setting which

utilizes a general structure throughout the entire play, the general structure being altered by additions and changes of a minor character to suggest the several scenes. This setting, together with others, is explained in Macgowan's "The Theatre of Tomorrow."

The *box set* which has been used on the professional stage for a number of years, is sometimes frowned upon by artists of the "new theatre." The frowns are occasioned by the tendency of the set towards a literalness which excludes any imaginative or poetic quality. But we all have looked into rooms solidly built of plaster and lath which contained atmosphere and charm and elusiveness. The box set in no way prohibits the display of these same qualities. However, the great advantage of this set is its practicability.

The set is made up of a number of flats. The setting is designed, the flats constructed, and the entire set is painted as one unit. One or two suggestions concerning the building of this set may be useful. While the walls often have the illusion of solidity, the painted canvas doors and window frames sometimes destroy this illusion. It is possible to secure several door and window frames, together with the doors and windows, from a dealer in second-hand building materials or probably from our own attic or basement, and build these into the flats. They will give firmness to the

flats and reality to the entire set. While a ceiling is not always convenient (the element of height secured by the flats extending upward beyond the range of vision being sometimes desirable), yet it usually adds to the appearance of a box set and also serves as a sounding board for the actors' voices. The ceiling, which rests on the tops of the flats, is raised or lowered by ropes and pulleys running to the loft.

Many plays call for a box set. Such a set is practicable, and it gives the scenic artist an opportunity for the application of his knowledge of design and color. Skilled labor is not necessary in its construction; accuracy and care are sufficient.

In discussing the last two kinds of scenery the question of exteriors has not been mentioned. Exteriors are a difficult problem with our modern stage conventions. Obviously the space limitations forbid the representation of a forest, desert, or any great expanse. What is the designer to do? We can advise him to suggest rather than represent, to eliminate details and choose only a few essential elements, securing his suggestion through them. But such advice does not tell him how to mask his sides nor how to meet any of his practical difficulties. Perhaps he will find his greatest practical help on exteriors in pictures of modern stage settings such as are to be found in

Moderwell's "The Theatre of Today" and Macgowan's "The Theatre of Tomorrow," and those which are appearing from month to month in the better theatre magazines.

One other point remains to be mentioned. It is almost always necessary to have a sky drop behind the set, whether it be a curtain, permanent, or, box set. If the size of the stage permits of it, a cyclorama should be used. Its curved surface, when properly lighted, gives an illusion of great depth. In case the cyclorama is impracticable, a straight drop will suffice. Neither cyclorama nor drop should be painted a vivid blue, but a grayish-blue or grayish-white.

(*d*) *Stage models*

The making of stage models may be of much practical value to the art director and scenic artist as they create their setting, and the completed model may aid the director as he works out his stage business for his actors. The student of design and stagecraft also will find it useful in his study of stage problems, and it may therefore be recommended to the teacher. But side by side with our endorsement of the stage model must go a warning. The authors know of courses in stagecraft which have been turned into workshops for the construction of painstakingly accurate little

models, absorbing the entire interest of the students for weeks, and resulting in a complete forgetfulness of the play as the matter for prime consideration. Making models is a fascinating occupation—like the making of ship models, for instance—and it is sometimes carried on for its own sake and not for the sake of solving the problems in connection with the staging of the play.

A stage model is the setting for a play, in miniature, and constructed to scale. For the making of models the following materials are needed:

Several sheets of corrugated cardboard, which is easily cut and bent and which possesses enough body to take the paint and to stand without warping or bending. Composition board may be used, though it is harder to work with. Ordinary cardboard is too limp and is unsuitable for the purpose.

Show card paint in an assortment of colors. This paint may be purchased in small or large jars. It mixes well and is easily applied. Neither oil paint, artist's water colors, nor kalsomine is satisfactory for painting models.

A pot of glue; not mucilage.

A pocket knife with a keen, thin blade (a scalpel or razor blade will serve), shears, and an assortment of small brushes.

To these materials may be added a sponge (for

the construction of trees), a lump of modelling clay, small blocks and sticks of soft wood, and small pieces of cloth for hangings, curtains, and covers.

The first step in making the model is to get the exact dimensions of the stage, including depth, width, height, and the dimensions of the proscenium opening; the second is to decide upon a general plan for the setting which is practicable and which is expressive of the play; the third step consists in drawing a rough sketch of the plan in which the design, color scheme, and arrangement of properties are worked out. For many designers this sketch will be sufficient; with it they can begin work; but for the beginner and for the artist who wishes to see his sketch in the three dimensions of the stage before he starts construction on the actual set, the stage model is now built.

The proscenium arch is cut out and set up; then the side and back walls, together with the openings, steps, and cut-outs. The entire model must be constructed to scale. One inch or three-quarters of an inch may be allowed to the foot. When the various units of the set have been cut out or made, they are glued together. If, when the model is put together its design is found to be good and the director is satisfied with its practicability, it is painted. If the properties, especially

the design and arrangement of furniture, offer a problem, then with cardboard, small blocks of wood, bits of cloth, and the glue pot, the furniture and other properties are made and painted. It goes without saying that for the model to be of real service it must be accurately built.

The model takes on an added usefulness when working out an exterior set. As has been suggested, one of the troublesome problems here is the masking of the sides of the stage. It is frequently difficult to determine just how far the sky drop must extend on either side, or where the tormentors, pillars, trees, or what-not must be placed in order to keep the space beyond the edge of the sky drop and the wing space invisible to the audience. Such problems may readily be solved with the model.

Other uses could be suggested. For instance, if the stage possesses a permanent set, a model of this set may be constructed, and all combinations and effects can be worked out simply and easily with the model. Problems of perspective become simplified with the use of the model. Through a study of the model, the actual work of constructing the set can be planned and estimated.

The beginner may not have complete success with his first model. The making of stage models is like embarking on countless other creative tasks: improvement comes with practice and experience.

(*e*) *Scenery construction*

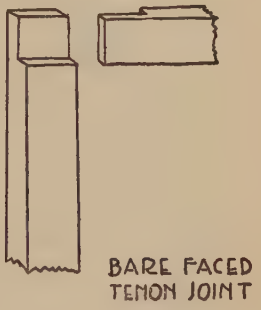
The art director is usually the scenic artist, and the scenic artist frequently has to construct the scenery. Therefore, while we are theoretically addressing the stage carpenter in this section, we are talking about a subject with which nine out of ten scenic artists are concerned.

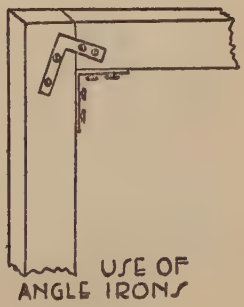
The stage carpenter needs only a modest tool kit. A smoothing plane, three saws: a cross cut, rip, and a frame saw, a square, a chisel, a brace and a bit, a hammer, and a draw knife will be ample. He may add to this list a mitre sawing box (a box containing slots which guide his saw in cutting an angle of 45°) which he can construct himself.

Since he wants a wood which is not expensive and one with which it is easy to work, he will find a soft wood most desirable. Yellow pine (also called white pine) is light, straight-grained, soft, and easy to work with. Since the availability and price of woods vary in different parts of the country, our best suggestion is that the carpenter go to the lumber yard and choose his wood, selecting a soft wood which is light, straight-grained, free from knots, well seasoned, and not likely to warp.

The one construction problem which is common to all theatres is the building of flats. For the building of flats (which vary in height from nine

to sixteen feet) 1″ x 3″ lumber is suitable. 1″ x 2″ boards may be used for short flats, but for tall flats this width of lumber will have to be braced very frequently. The joints of the frames should be strong and accurately made. For quick work, when the flats are to be used only a few times and then worked over, the angle iron joint is sufficient; for more permanent work, the bare-faced tenon joint and mitre joint are better; the strong-





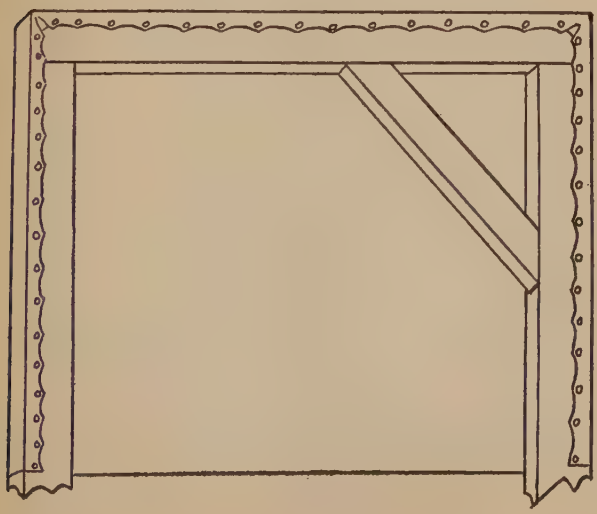
est joint of all is the mortise and tenon joint. These joints are illustrated in the accompanying diagram.

The flat should be braced well to prevent warping and twisting. At least two diagonal braces and one straight brace should be allowed to each flat. The diagonal braces may easily be sawed to

BRACING FOR THE FLAT

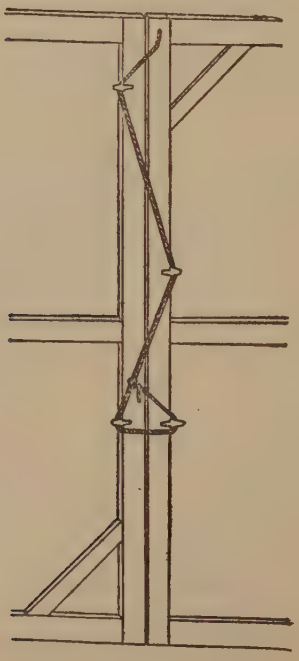
the proper angle with the mitre sawing box, and may be fastened to the outside frame with corrugated fasteners.

The width of flats varies. The width of canvas or cloth which is to be stretched over the flat is a factor to be considered in calculating the width of the flat. A three foot flat is as narrow as is practicable; a six foot flat is as wide as is practicable on a small stage. In applying the canvas, it should be carried over the edge and tacked. Small tacks, placed about three inches apart, are preferable to large tacks. It is not necessary to glue the canvas to the frame, as the sizing and painting will glue it later. The canvas should not be



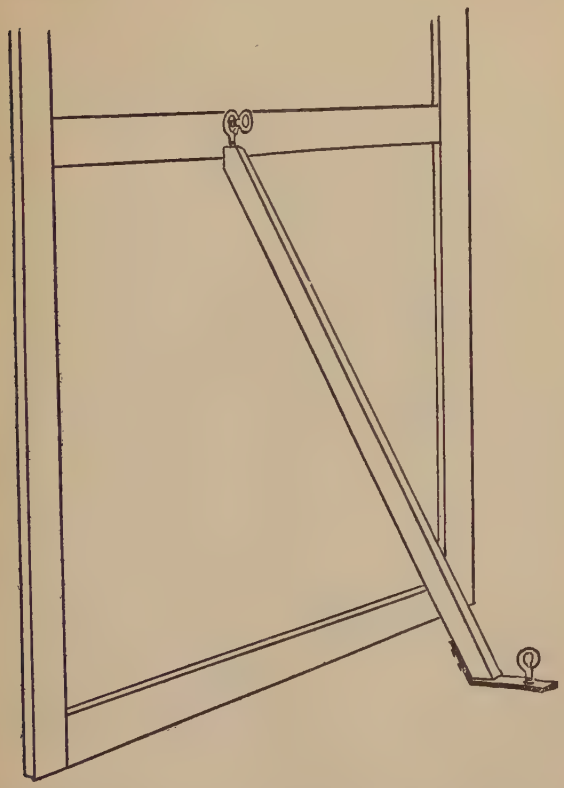
stretched too tight, for if it is, when the paint shrinks it it may either tear, or warp the frame.

When the cloth has been stretched, the lash lines should be attached. A line (clothes line rope is good) is fastened near the top of the flat as in the diagram. Small irons, or nails even, extend from the inner side of the uprights in the manner



shown, thus permitting of the tight lashing of two flats.

Finally, when the flats are in use and are lashed



together, they may be firmly secured to the floor by means of stage braces and floor screws which can be purchased at any stage equipment house.

Satisfactory braces can be made from a strip of 1″ x 2″ six feet long, an angle iron, and three screw eyes.

(*f*) *Points for the scenic artist*

A successful stage design is not one which is complicated and full of details, but one which is simple and understandable.

One center of interest in the stage picture is better than two or three. The center of the stage is not the place for the center of interest if the stage picture is to appear fresh and interesting. This statement, like many others, must admit of exceptions. In general however, it applies to line, mass, color, and furniture. The artist should remember that there is an æsthetic center in the stage picture.

Canvas is expensive and a heavy grade of unbleached muslin is excellent for covering the flats. It comes in many widths, from 36″ to 72″. The best materials for drapes are monk's cloth, rep, and velours; or challis, denim, ratiné, and unbleached muslin may be used. The cloth selected should not have a shiny finish, should hang well, and should be tested for color under electric light.

Kalsomine (water) paints have several advantages over oil for scene painting. They are

cheaper, more easily applied, take lights better, and do not glare or shine.

The muslin should be sized before being painted the desired color. Sizing, when water paint is used, merely consists in giving the flat a first coat. This coat, which should be gray or white kalsomine, will stiffen the muslin and give it body.

A new flat should be given three coats of paint, including the sizing coat. The set should be painted under light conditions similar to those which will exist on the stage.

"Broken" color will give varied light effects. To apply broken color, the artist should paint the flats a neutral color: gray, buff, or light brown, then spray them with brilliant green, red, orange, and purple. When colored lights are played upon flats painted in this way, illusions may be obtained which are impossible on a flat-covered surface. Of course, other colors than the ones named may be used.

Color may be "sprayed" either by dipping a stiff-bristled brush in the color that is to be sprayed, then drawing a knife along the bristles, thus throwing the paint on to the flat, or by dipping a sponge into the color and dabbing it on to the flat.

In painting his set, the artist should use too little rather than too much detail. When he is

representing woodwork, especially, few high lights and shadows are preferable to many.

(B) THE COSTUMER

It is evident that the scenic artist should also be the costumer. Only when they are the same person can we feel assured of the unity between setting and costumes which is necessary to an artistic production. If the scenic artist cannot actually direct the making of costumes, he should certainly select the general design and indicate the colors to be used. His assistant should be one who understands design, color, and materials. It is not necessary that the costumer be a good seamstress or that he know anything about dressmaking in the usual sense. Often such knowledge is a handicap. For it must be remembered that realism on the stage does not achieve the effect of realism for the audience. Costuming is subject to the same accentuation and emphasis as acting. No costumer can be sure that he is successfully costuming a modern play when he permits the actors (or at any rate, the actresses) to wear exactly what the characters would wear in real life. Nor should actors ever be allowed to select their own costumes, for they invariably select what they believe to be a style and color

becoming to *themselves*, regardless of the characters they are to represent.

(*a*) *Design*

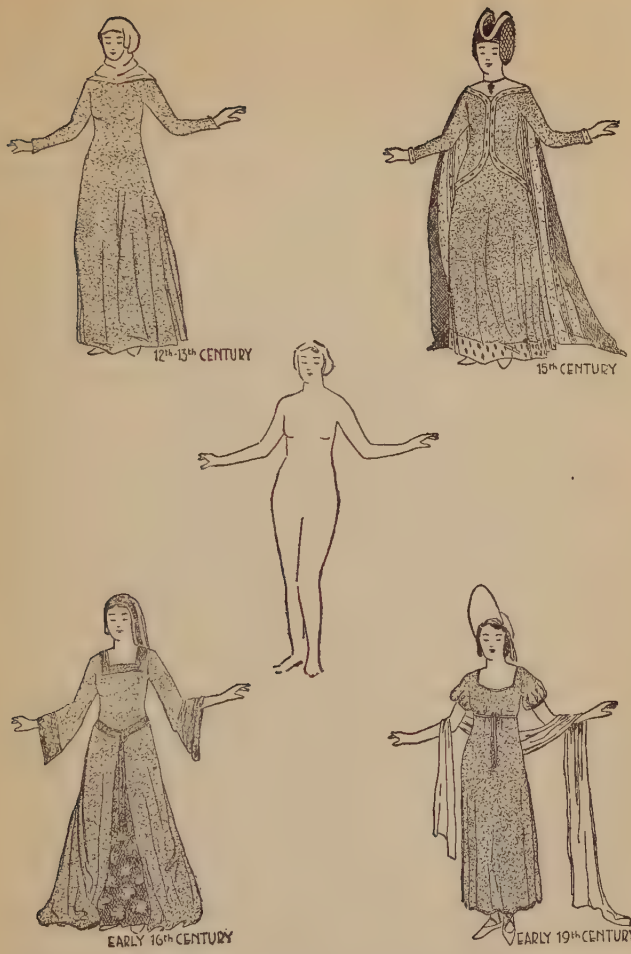
The designing or selecting of all the costumes must be in the hands of one person, preferably the scenic artist. If he cannot undertake the work, then it must be put in the hands of one who will be advised by him in all matters.

The design of each costume must be in harmony with the set in which it is to be worn and in harmony with every other costume appearing on the stage at the same time. It must be true in some outstanding respect to the period of the play, and it must be a help to the actor and not a hindrance.

If the play is realistic, and the set is realistic, the costumes should partake of the same quality; if the play calls for a set that is simple and dignified, certainly any bizarre design in costume will be out of harmony; if the play is spectacular and the set decorative the costumes may likewise be decorative; if the play is a farce or burlesque, and the set bizarre with irregular and unusual lines, variations may appear in the costumes; ruffles, furbelows, parasols, bags—the unusual in dress and accessories. In the matter of costumes it must

once more be borne in mind that the general effect is to intensify the mood of the play, while the business of each individual costume is further concerned with sharpening the effect of the character which it clothes.

We have said that costume must be true in some important respect to the period of the play. Absolute fidelity to the period is not necessary. That a costume shall be beautiful and harmonious is much more to the point (if the costume suggests the period) than that it shall be historically authentic. The amateur costumer who must costume an historical play or pageant will find many practical books on costume to assist him, and he will also find valuable suggestions in the paintings of the period he is to reproduce. But only the helpless costumer will follow a picture faithfully. The clever designer will consider the type, mood, and degree of historical accuracy of the play, the design of the sets to be used, and the figures of his actors. He will then select the simplest foundation garment characteristic of the period and in harmony with the play and the set, and by a judicious choice of headdress, sleeve, and collar design, he will make a composite design suited to his needs. In all he will avoid unnecessary details. A simple garment is always more effective than an elaborate one unless the elaborate costume is the product of genius.



The same costume modified to fit the characteristic mode of several periods

In regard to one point only need the actor be consulted about his costume: he must judge of its comfort. A garment that is to be worn upon the stage must be comfortable, something which the actor can wear with ease. Often an amateur actor will complain that he feels awkward in his costume. Sometimes a little training and experience in wearing the costume will dissipate this sense of awkwardness. If the actor cannot be trained to wear his costume without dress consciousness, then the costume should be modified until he can wear it with ease.

Good and bad points of figures must be taken into consideration. A tall thin girl with bony neck and long arms should never be put into an unrelieved decolleté. The dress should certainly have sleeves, no matter what the author's directions are for dressing the character, and a scarf may be worn which will soften the neck lines. The wise costumer does much building of his costume on the person who is to wear it, so that in its plastic state he can accentuate or modify points in order to bring out the greatest grace and beauty of the figure he is clothing.

If a costumer is to provide costumes for a fantasy he is unhampered by period. If he has imagination (and imagination now becomes essential) he may let it range far and wide, binding

himself only to the general principles of design, and to the spirit of the play. He will find suggestions for his fantasy costumes in the sketches and photographs appearing in such magazines as *The Drama*, *The Theatre*, and *The Theatre Arts Monthly*, in the work of such men as Leon Bakst, and in the costumes worn in our modern reviews and musical plays. If he is to design costumes for a classical or an historical play, he will find help in such books as: "Dress Design" by Talbot Hughes and "Costuming a Play" by Grimball and Wells, in the costume plates published by *The School Arts Magazine*, and in the pictures of the different periods.

It is more often in designing costumes for the so called "modern plays" that the costumer finds himself without aids, and uncertain what to do. Suppose the play to be one which depicts life in Spain at the present time; and suppose further that the play is to be presented in Winslow, Wyoming. It will not do at all for the costumer to discover what is being worn in Madrid during the present season and then clothe his actors in garments representative of the season. His garments may be ever so true, and yet fail to convey truth to the majority of the audience. He will do much better if he designs costumes that possess, in general, the lines of the costumes being worn, but

which are embellished with trimmings and accessories which we are wont to think of as being distinctively Spanish. So, if he is costuming a present day English drama for rural America, he must convey English atmosphere, not through fidelity to the prevailing mode, but through costumes modified by elements which his audience will accept as English.

Many plays written years ago still tell us that the time of the play is "the present." What is a costumer to do with such a play? If there is nothing in the play which is contradicted by the present, the statement may be taken literally, and the actors dressed in modern costumes; if the play will become more interesting or significant by placing it back at the time of its composition, then "the present" should be translated to mean the date of the original production. In the revival of "Candida" in New York during the 1924–'25 season, the actors were costumed, not in the present mode, but in the mode of thirty years ago.

Two seasons ago we saw an adequate production of "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" in which the costumes showed a careful avoidance of all that was the prevailing mode; the costumes were not seemingly perverted, they simply were not of the day and so succeeded in intensifying the mood of semi-reality. This simple trick of avoiding all that is being worn by the audience will

often convey the impression of something foreign, or of another locality, or a different station in life; and supplemented by details which are authentic, it will frequently achieve convincing and effective costuming.

(*b*) *Color*

The color scheme in costume is decided by the requirements of the play, by the principles of design and color harmony, and by the effect of light colors upon the color in materials. As with the scenic artist, the costume designer must have a knowledge of color combinations. He must not make the mistake of choosing blue costumes for a scene which is to be lighted by amber lights; and he will not if he knows that amber or white lights fade or kill blues and greens. He should know that red lights are fatal to all colors except shades of red, that white and amber lights intensify warm colors. (A chart of the effect of light on color will be found under the section devoted to the electrician.) He would do well to remember that a monochromatic color scheme can achieve the effect of variety and will simplify the lighting problem for the electrician.

We have already spoken of the suggestive power of color. What applies to color as used by the scenic artist applies equally to color as used by the

costume designer. Emphasis may be given to a character by a brilliant costume; emphasis may be removed by a drab costume. The mood of the play may be intensified by the colors employed in the costumes. It is quite evident that "The Trojan Women," an unrelieved tragedy, should not be costumed in gay, light colors; it is also evident that it should not be costumed in black. The somberness of black may be obtained through the use of various shades of purple combined with gray and white.

Let us repeat our statement that the value of color must be considered in relation to the importance of the character. Subordinate characters should not be put in costumes containing colors which are of high intensity; these colors should be used for the important characters.

If the costume designer desires accuracy in his use of color in period plays he can do no better than to make a study of the tapestry, fabrics, paintings, and ceramics of the period of his play.

(*c*) *Materials and dyeing*

In making costumes for the theatre it is not necessary that the same materials be used which would be used in making costumes for the street or ball room, but it is necessary that the effect of that material be given. The surface, weight, and

weave of the cloth must be considered. And since it is often necessary to dye materials in order to secure the best color schemes, the ease with which a fabric can be dyed must also be taken into account.

In general we may suggest that poor people, the lowly of all periods, should be dressed in materials of coarse weave and dull surface. It may be heavy or light in weight. We may also suggest that people of power and distinction should wear materials of fine weave, rich and heavy, with a lustrous surface. Useful materials for the first group are: heavy unbleached muslin, burlap, denim, towelling, cheap calicos, ginghams, cotton flannel, and cretonne; materials for the second group are; challis, voile, mull, brocade, satins and silks, all metallic cloths (such as gold, silver, and bronze), and velvets.

Because the business manager or budget committee finds it difficult to meet the demands of the costume department (costumes always cost more than the budget allowance), it is well for the costumer to know how cheap materials may be made to look rich, what substitutions are practicable under stage lights, and how desired colors may be secured by dyeing.

Perhaps no material serves so many purposes in the non-professional theatre as unbleached muslin. A close second is cotton flannel. These two ma-

terials are cheap, and in the hands of a careful dyer, take on amazing quality and attractiveness. Sateens often give the effect of satins, and become metallic cloths when coated with gold, aluminum, or bronzing paint. Oil cloth, when judiciously used, gives a rich effect in trimming and is valuable in making whole costumes in spectacles. Voiles are the cheapest of the finer materials that can be advantageously used. Cheese cloth is, as everyone knows, often serviceable.

For the costumer who does only occasional dyeing, good dyes can be bought in packages with directions for using. It is necessary to select the dye with regard to the material to be dyed; no attempt should be made to dye silk with cotton dye. Basic dyes may be used when the costumes are not to be worn in the sunlight and when especial brilliancy is desired. These dyes may be used on silks, wool, leather, or feathers directly, but cotton stuffs must first be dipped in a mild solution of cotton dye before the basic dye is applied. If a great deal of dyeing is to be done, it is cheaper to buy dyes by the pound. A few pounds of primary cotton colors, and such basic dyes as Safranine red, Rhodamine red, Victoria green, Auramine yellow, Imperial blue, Victoria blue, and Methylene blue will be found sufficient for the average non-professional dye shop.

It is well to remember that flat dyeing is not effective in the theatre. Double and uneven dyeing always lights better. Good stage blues are secured by dipping the materials to be dyed in a weak solution of blue dye for cotton and then re-dipping in one of the basic blues; good purples result from dipping the materials in blue and then re-dipping in red. Colors so secured have a vibrant quality under artificial light that is brilliant and interesting. All that we have said concerning the properties and values of color is of interest to the costume designer.

Interesting effects can be secured by tying the material to be used. The material may be dipped, then tied at regular or irregular intervals with cord, and dipped again; or circles may be tied in the material between dips, or the material itself may be tied in knots. The interested experimenter will soon learn to elaborate these suggestions.

In general, no material lends itself to experimental dyeing so readily as unbleached muslin. Interesting effects of panne velvet may be secured by unevenly dying cheap sateen and then rough drying it. Cotton flannel takes dye well and gives the effect of a much heavier and richer material.

When effects must be secured quickly, or when the costumer prefers the paint brush to the dye

pot, he may color his costume material with the same paint that is used by the scenic artist. Unbleached muslin painted with a thin solution of kalsomine and water, will hold the color and can be made up without difficulty. Excellent color effects can be secured in this way; and trimming designs can, and frequently should, be applied with paint. These painted designs are especially effective in spectacles and pageants.

It is surely needless to add that all dyed and painted materials should be tested for color under the color conditions in which they are to be worn, in order to avoid disappointments at dress rehearsals.

The amateur dyer will find Charles E. Pellew's book "Dyes and Dyeing" a valuable hand book.

(*d*) *Acquiring a wardrobe*

It is not necesary to suggest any plan whereby a theatre organization may save and increase the number of its costumes; but it is advisable to suggest to the organization the advantages of a wardrobe.

First of all, there is the financial consideration. Renting costumes is very expensive. A costume rents for from three to five dollars. For a cast of twenty characters, the bill amounts to nearly one hundred dollars. When there are changes in

costumes, the bill is increased. When the play is presented more than once, it is increased still further. Many beautiful and effective costumes can be made for from five to ten dollars. The rental expenditure for a single production could oftentimes provide the organization with a wardrobe of twenty good costumes. Within a few seasons the wardrobe would be so large that future costuming expense would be inconsequential.

There is the further advantage of being able to alter and change the costumes. It is true that some costume houses are very careful in the matter of sizes and periods. But the costumer sometimes makes mistakes in ordering, and finds on his hands costumes which do not fit or do not look well on his actors. In such a case nothing can be done save to make the best of a bad situation. If, on the other hand, the costumes are available in the costume room, the costumer has greater choice than is usually to be found when they are ordered, and he can fit, adjust, and alter to suit the conditions of the play and the figures of his actors.

A third advantage is that the costumes are always on hand. How often does the amateur company experience the uncomfortable sensation of waiting for the costume box to arrive. If it arrives just before the dress rehearsal, the rehearsal is frequently disrupted; if it doesn't arrive until after dress rehearsal, there is added annoyance

and irritation, and either a special costume rehearsal has to be called, or the actors have to go on, trusting to fate that their costumes will look as they should. With the costumes available at all times, such situations can be completely avoided. The actors will have their costumes some days before the performance, and will have an opportunity to get used to them and lose all dress consciousness before they appear in public.

In these few pages we have done no more than hint at the question of costuming. In summary, may we say that if the inexperienced costumer will learn the principles of design, master the simple color combinations, make himself familiar with materials, and keep at hand a good costume guide and a collection of penny prints of masterpieces; and if, in addition, he has a growing wardrobe to work from, he may soon hope to be able to costume his company's plays in a manner which will be satisfying to himself and to his audience.

(c) THE ELECTRICIAN

We shall begin this section on lighting with a quotation from Moderwell's book "The Theatre of Today," published in 1914. "Of all the problems of the old stage setting that of lighting was perhaps the simplest. Its chief principle was merely this : Let there be light. Its second

principle was: In case of emotion, let there be green light. One easily recalls the stage tables which shone brighter on the under side than on top. On the old stage, no one ever had a shadow. Or, if there was a shadow, it was cast, life size, on the distant landscape."

A comparison of the lighting suggested in this quotation with the lighting to be seen on hundreds of present day non-professional stages, calls attention to the remarkable development in stage lighting of the last quarter century. The past few years have given us wonderful discoveries and inventions. And we are still experimenting with lighting. The near future may yield us devices and methods which will make our present day lighting as ridiculous as the lighting of the nineteenth century. Since much of the experimentation is being carried on in the non-professional theatre, the question of lighting becomes of keen interest to all of us.

(*a*) *The use of light on the stage*

Lighting first became necessary for the stage when the natural light of the sun was shut out by a roof over the theatre. Its first use was the practical one of illumination. For centuries no other use was thought of, all effort being directed towards securing a sufficient amount of light to

render facial expression and details of business visible to the audience. With the development of the electric light, and especially of the incandescent, the effort was at last rewarded and rewarded with a vengeance. The stage became blindingly bright. The glare from the footlights below, augmented by the glare from the borders above, made expression and movement visible to the point of monotony, and such flat and uninteresting lighting began to be criticized as unnatural and ugly.

Even before sufficient illumination had been obtained, experiments were being carried on to make light more "effective" in the play. The experimentation continued. Instead of using borders and foots, the light sources were shifted to more reasonable places; through the use of spot lights, floods, and strips (that is, troughs of lights which were stood upon end in the wings and behind the tormentors) natural light sources were suggested. The intensity of light was varied. Color was added to direction and intensity. These experiments gave us such effects as sunlight coming through the window or through the branches of trees; firelight illuminating part of the room, leaving the remainder of the room in shadow; an electric light on the street corner; moonlight coming through the doorway; a warm room and a cold wintry day without. It became possible for the electrician to produce, not only a natural effect

with his lights, but an emotional effect in harmony with his play, just as the painter produces an emotional effect with design and color.

And experimentation has not stopped with effectiveness. Light became an actor. Lighting mechanism grew costly and complex, and the electrician became a wizard, capable of astounding and thrilling an audience with his amazing lighting. Scenery, costumes, even actors, are now occasionally subordinated to lighting. In some theatres and under some directors, light assumes a supreme importance. Using the stage as an exhibition hall and the play as an excuse, it becomes an end in itself. Light patterns, beautiful light harmonies, thrilling light effects, are the center of interest.

We find then, three uses of light on the modern stage. The first, illumination, has been of service to the audience. The second, emotional effectiveness, has been of assistance to the play. The third, self expression without obligation to the play, while being of service neither to the play nor the audience, has, nevertheless, permitted the development of a new art which may, with time, find a larger place in the unity of the play.

To what uses, then, may the amateur electrician put his light? He should be warned about the third use of which we have been speaking. He should not make his lighting too prominent, should

not employ lighting because it is novel or startling or beautiful. Just as the scenic artist is in danger of over-emphasizing his scenery and making the actors play up to it, so is the electrician in danger of giving us an over-emphasized lighting which compels the actors to act up to (or against) his high lights and shadows, his light movements and patterns. Let him experiment all he desires: with quantity and quality of light and with the effect of light on all sorts of materials; but let him respect the play when he attempts to present the results of his experiments to the public.

With this word of caution, the electrician may feel free to use his light in any way which will help the play and express its mood. He should, of course, see that his light is sufficient for illumination; and he will not go far wrong if he sets as his goal a naturally effective lighting. As long as the stage remains illusionistic, this would seem to be a reasonable goal. It will not prescribe narrow limits for his imagination. He can mass his lights and shadows, superimposing a design upon the scenic design if he is so minded, or supplementing the scenic pattern. He can throw the actor into shadow occasionally and the play will not suffer from it. He can give his stage a poetic and illusive quality and still keep his lighting reasonable. Naturally effective lighting does not mean turning on colored lights, nor does it mean

flooding the stage with amber and placing a blue light behind the window; such tricks soon grow as monotonous as flat illumination. Natural light is sometimes strange and beautiful and subtle, and its quality is varied. The electrician's light should be modulated, toned down or up, broken up in a manner which will convey not a general mood but the specific mood of the play. The cold northern sunshine which is reasonable for an Ibsen play, is of a different quality from the sunshine of Spain or Italy. He would do well, then, to free himself from the old lighting traditions on the one hand, and from the worship of the switch board on the other; he should study natural light; and having done so, he should seek to imitate, emphasize, and beautify that which he has seen.

Surely the electrician does not need to be told of his obligation to the actor. The actor is the live element, the transformer of the play, and his changing expression and subtle movements are of more interest to the audience than a revelation of the spectrum or a shifting mass of shadows. The electrician's use of light should always take into account the movement of the actors.

The electrician, as well as the scenic artist, should know what the director is doing with his actors. It is presumed that the art director will keep him informed, or request him to attend an occasional rehearsal. If he has a suggestion, a

new idea, it should, of course, be given a trial. Most directors welcome new ideas with open arms. The electrician may want to try a silhouette scene. If so, he should be given the opportunity. He will find the silhouette frequently effective pictorially, but seldom effective dramatically. From his experimentation with the silhouette, he may be able to learn something about lighting his backgrounds; for if he has watched the actors acting in silhouette, he has discovered that a bright background is difficult for the actors to play against.

Together with his fellow artists, the electrician needs a technically trained mind and a lively imagination; he should be able to think in watts and amperes and in picture and mood. Even when lighting the simplest stage, he ought to know how big a "load" his lines will carry; where his fuse plugs are located, so in case of a blow-out he can put in a new fuse; and he ought to test his switch board and make out his light plot before a performance. Besides these points, it is useful for him to know that the wires from the fuses to the switch board should be large, those from light to light thin; that copper wires should be used on the stage because of their low resistance; that all wires and equipment should be insulated to prevent fires and short circuits; and he should see that his stage is equipped with fire extinguishers.

(*b*) *Lighting equipment*

The lighting equipment may be fixed or it may be movable. On the old stage, the foots and borders were in fixed places and the electrician scarcely moved from the switch board during a performance. Today we sometimes find only one piece of equipment—the first border—in permanent position, the other pieces, consisting of spots and floods, on standards, towers, and battens, being arranged about the stage in different positions for each scene. The two systems suggest two different starting points for building up the lighting of a scene. In the first, we turn the lights on full and then cut out and dim down until we have a satisfactory lighting; in the second, we start with darkness and build up our lighting until the desired effects are obtained.

The second system seems to offer us the more logical method; but since movable equipment is new and expensive, and fixed equipment is more common and is often adequate to meet all our needs, it may not be amiss to suggest a fixed equipment for a small theatre and then pass on to a further discussion of movable equipment.

A satisfactory fixed equipment may be listed as follows:

1. The first or concert border. The trough should be of tin, and should be shorter

than the proscenium width to permit of lowering below the ceiling of an interior box set. The lights of the border should be divided into three color circuits and also into sections so that the stage may be lighted sectionally.

2. A small border or an overhead arrangement for a flood light which is suspended at the rear of the box set to illuminate the background. In the borders the lights should be close together, otherwise we will get shadows; as 100 watt lamps give a glare, 40 or 60 watt lamps should be used.
3. Footlights. They should be sunk so that a glare does not appear above the stage floor, and they should be close enough to the proscenium so that the lights do not illuminate the outside of the arch. On footlights as well as on borders, two or three circuits are necessary.
4. Flood lights. Flood lights have been developed from the old bunch lights which consisted of a cluster of bulbs in a large pan. A flood light is usually set upon an adjustable standard so that the light may be directed wherever it is needed. Two flood lights are sufficient.
5. Spotlights. For a small stage, small spots

are more serviceable than large ones. There should be two spotlights.

6. Dimmers. Dimmers are very useful. For the equipment we have suggested, a bank of seven dimmers is desirable: two for the first border, two for the footlights, one for the small border, and two so adjusted that they can be attached to the floods or spots. With this number, the effect of changing, increasing and decreasing the light can be handled naturally.

This equipment, together with a number of floor plugs set conveniently about the stage, will be found sufficient to light any ordinary stage satisfactorily.

With the movable equipment it is not so easy to be dogmatic. Certainly the first border should remain fixed. As with the fixed equipment, the border should be divided into color circuits and sections. The footlights may, or may not, be used. If they are in place, it would be unwise to tear them out, for occasionally they are serviceable. At least two spotlights and two flood lights on tall, adjustable standards; a device whereupon an overhead light (either flood or spot) may be suspended overhead at the center and back of the stage; and a high standard or tower which can be set up just inside the tormentor at the side of the stage will be parts of the equipment. The elec-

trician will soon become acquainted with his stage, and will devise other serviceable equipment. As with the fixed equipment, dimmers should be connected with each of these light units.

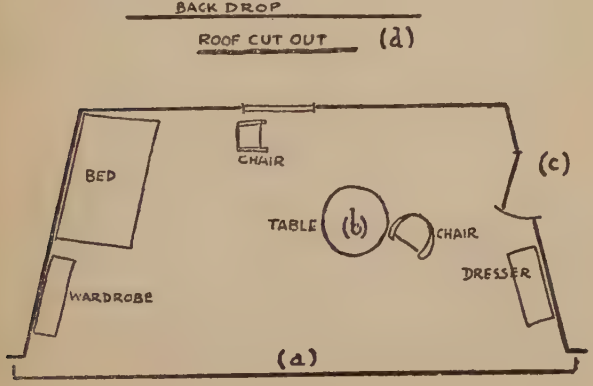
A word may be said concerning the position and arrangement of the switch board. It should be placed on the side of the stage from which the curtain is operated. The switches should, if possible, be arranged to suggest the lights which they control. That is, thinking of the top of the switch board as the front of the stage, the switches at the top should control the lights at the front of the stage, those at the bottom, the lights at the back; while the switches on the right side should control the right side of the stage and the switches on the left, the left of the stage. It need not be added that the dimmers should be placed conveniently near the switch board.

(*c*) *Practical problems in lighting*

The successful use of light depends first, upon adequate equipment, and second, upon adequate experimentation. The mood of the play and the arrangement of the elements in each individual setting raise questions in regard to lighting which can be answered only through experience and experimentation. At the risk of repeating much of what is already known, let us work out several simple problems in lighting.

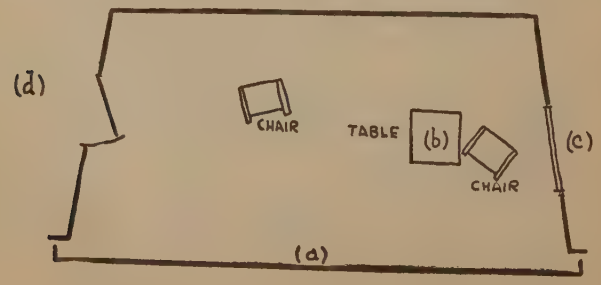
In the rather hopeless, realistic one-act play "The Poet Writes A Song" the action calls for a small, cheaply-furnished, combination living and bed room, overlooking the city. There is one door and one window. The furniture consists of bed, dresser, table, two chairs, and wardrobe. During the action, one of the girls puts out the light in the room and goes to bed, while the other sits at the window and watches the moon go down. Since the play is realistic, our problem is that of lighting the room realistically, giving the illusion of the moon going down, and always keeping some natural light in the room so that the action may be visible after the light has been put out. How can our problem be met?

Let us say that the floor plan of our stage is as follows:



At (a) we will have the footlights, straw or amber, dimmed down so that objects in the room are just visible; at (b) a light on a drop cord, above the table, and high enough so that the actors' faces are illuminated by it as they move around the table; at (c) a light off stage which shines through a transom above the door; at (d) a flood light on a dimmer, and covered with blue gelatin. When the light at (b) is snapped off, the footlights are turned off. This still leaves the light shining through the transom, which falls across the room, past the window, and onto the bed. And when (d) is dimmed completely down, we still have enough light coming from (c) to make the action visible. So, our problem has been met, and we have not resorted to any unnatural lighting to make our lighting effective.

Parker gives his little play, "A Minuet," a realistic setting, but as the play is poetic and unrealistic, we may challenge the author's judgment about his setting. At any rate, the play may be set satisfactorily with this arrangement:



Our problem here is to create the impression of a dungeon-like interior and to keep the actors (there are only two on the stage at a time) in the light. This may be done by dimming the white foots (a), by the candle on the table (b), by a strong white light (c) coming through a high, barred window, and by a dimmed flood (d). We may increase the light which the candle is presumed to throw by suspending a small spot overhead (b). The face of the Marquis, playing mostly at stage L., is illuminated by the candle; the face of the Marchioness is in the light which comes from the window; the Jailer, when he makes his second entrance, is in partial silhouette from the flood at (d). This flood also gives the Marquis and Marchioness a good light for their exit. The action of a play which is lighted in this manner must be rehearsed carefully with the lights, otherwise the actors will be playing in each other's shadows.

(*d*) *Points for the electrician*

Lights should not call attention to themselves. In a rather pretentious production of "Hamlet" which toured the country during 1924–'25, when the cock crew a red light was turned on, and the interest of the audience shifted at once from Shakespere to the switch board. If in "The Poet Writes

A Song" we should use, instead of a silhouette of roofs back of the window, small apertures representing windows in which lights appeared and disappeared, interest would be diverted to watching these lights snap on and off.

Since lighting is in an early stage of development, there are no dogmas attached to it, and no prescribed rules for its use; therefore, the electrician should be free to experiment.

Much of his equipment, such as standards, light troughs, and flood boxes, need not be purchased, for they can be made in the work room.

Colored light is obtained in two ways. First, through the use of gelatin sheets which are placed over the floods, spots, or other lights. When using gelatin sheets, the electrician should place them between wires to prevent their curling; and he should be sure that the light box is provided with air holes, otherwise the gelatin will quickly heat and melt. The second way of securing colored light is by dipping or dyeing the lamp bulbs. The dip used is an aniline dye which comes in several colors. In order to color his lamps he suspends them, in sockets, and turns on the current. His dye is then placed in a can, the bulbs immersed in the dye, removed and allowed to dry. Dyed lamps are highly satisfactory in borders and foots. Light bulbs cannot be painted. Tissue paper is a poor substitute for gelatin or dye.

The colors he will have cause to use most frequently are white, straw, and blue; less frequently, amber and red.

Red light on yellow paint gives orange; on blue, violet; on green, red-gray; on black, purple-black.

Yellow (amber) light on red paint gives dull orange; on green, yellowish-green; on light blue, yellowish-green; on indigo, orange-yellow; on violet, yellow-brown.

Green light on red paint gives brown; on yellow, yellow-green; on blue, dark green.

Blue light on yellow paint gives green; on black, blue-black; on red, violet; on orange, yellow-brown.

Light on dye in costumes should have the same effects as on paints, but the material of the costume often varies these effects.

One simple suggestion may be given in regard to shadows. When the shadow of an actor appears on the sky drop, the shadow may be removed by placing the source of the light sufficiently high above the actor.

(D) THE MECHANIC AND THE PROPERTY MAN

From the *periaktoi* of the Greeks, through the Hell Mouth of the medieval stage, down to the thunder sheets of our own day, the mechanic has been the handy man of the stage workers. In the

modern European theatres he has risen to the position of help-mate of the artist, as well as master in his own right. His chief tasks in this theatre have been to simplify the problem of changes of set, and of mechanicalizing the stage for artistic purposes. But the expert mechanic finds his work only on a large and complex stage; in the non-professional theatre his work has been and is, like that of the property man, to do the bidding of the director or art director: to construct a moon, or produce a thunderstorm; to find a sofa of a certain type or size, to devise a Russian samovar, or to procure something that will look like peat.

Concerning the work of the property man we need say only a few words: he should know the play and the mood of the play and should provide properties which are not neutral but which are in character with the play, which enhance rather than detract from its mood; he should begin his search for properties several weeks before the time of the production and not on the day of the dress rehearsal; and he should never, on his own initiative, decide that "something else will do just as well."

The ingenuity of the mechanic is seldom needed, therefore he has not become a separate figure in the non-professional theatre. As stated else-

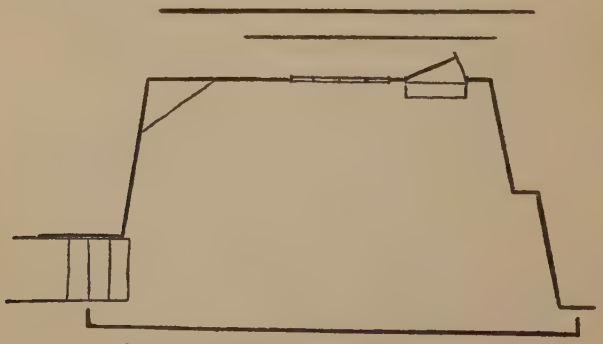
where, mechanical effects should be reduced to a minimum, but occasionally it is found that a mechanical effect is essential to the action of the play. Most amateurs know how to attain the effects required, but for those who are not familiar with the simple devices, the following hints may prove suggestive:

A thunder crash is produced by shaking a piece of sheet iron; a rumble of thunder by rolling a bowling ball across the floor. A breeze outside a door or window may be simulated by an electric fan. Wet salt will give the effect of snow, and glycerine of rain, on the clothes of an actor. Glycerine mixed with crimson dry color will give the effect of a bloody wound. The sound of the sea is produced by making a framework eight feet long and one foot wide of 1″ by 3″ lumber, and covering both sides of the frame with canvas after several handfuls of navy beans and shot have been placed inside; the "sea" is produced by tipping the contrivance downward first at one end and then at the other. Fire cracker punk or joss sticks placed in a fireplace will provide an effective and harmless smoke. A small electric stove hidden in a cook stove or fireplace is useful when cooking is part of the stage business.

The experienced amateur needs no such hints; he could probably prolong the list indefinitely.

5. The Unification of the Art Director's Work: A Practical Problem

It may be illuminating to bring together the diversified work of the art director in a simple, practical problem. For this purpose, let us examine Doris F. Halman's one-act play "Will-o'-the-Wisp." Upon study, the play is seen to be unrealistic, fantastic, rising through several minor crises, which are brought about by the uncanny actions of the white-faced girl, to a tragic, supernatural climax; yet the mood of fantasy never absents itself, even in the tragic moments. Having discovered the mood of the play, and while still under its spell, let us set to work. Miss Halman has suggested an appropriate setting and modifying it only in minor details, we shall plot our stage as follows:



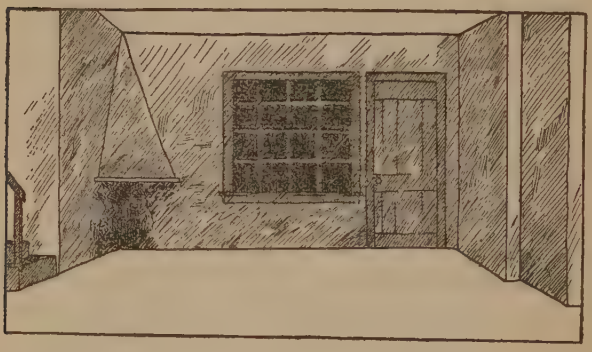
FLOOR PLAN OF "WILL-O'-THE-WISP"

We have kept the suggested setting, save that we have omitted the shelf at lower R., and have inserted a "jog" in the L. wall to break up the wall space and to balance the irregularity in the R. wall.

How will our properties fit into our plan? First, what properties are needed? A table, three chairs, two candles; these are all the required pieces. Are any more desirable? The fireplace will appear bare without andirons. These, added to the necessary properties, will be sufficient. We can decide at this time that the furniture should be simple, of straight lines, a bit out of the ordinary, perhaps, but not fantastic. Through our repetition of straight vertical lines in furniture and setting, we are suggesting a rhythm; since the white-faced girl will later in the play become an embodiment of rhythm of graceful curving lines, we can contrast the rhythm of the set with her rhythmic dance, and so emphasize it more strongly.

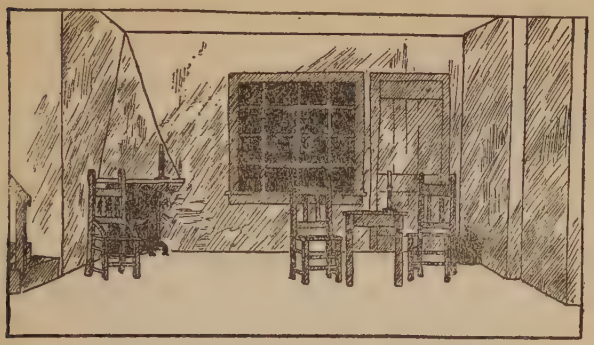
The design of our set is adequate. What of color? We could use a whitish-brown, or a gray, as the author suggests. Let us select gray, and let us endeavor to work out a monochromatic color scheme in grays, using tones from gray-black to gray-white. Let us use thick, warm tones rather than cold tones, for the atmosphere of the play does not justify us in making our audience shiver.

Let us paint our set a plain gray, unrelieved save by the darker gray of the wood work and the gray-black of the fireplace. The furniture is painted a tone between the wall and woodwork tones. Our set, designed and painted, will now appear something like this:



We have, of course, consulted with the director about the setting and properties. We now go over the action together and see that furniture will fit into our set as in the illustration on the following page.

What about the lighting? The action proceeds from twilight into black night. Therefore, against our back drop, beyond the door and window, we will direct an intense gray light from a flood, which is to be dimmed to absolute black-



ness during the action of the play. (We may, or may not, represent a silhouette of cliff and moor in our background, according to our taste.) The natural lighting of the room is by two candles, but these are not sufficient for stage purposes. We might use straw colored lamps in the foot-lights, dimming them down so that the faces in the room are barely discernible. And if the room contains no ceiling, we might suspend a light above each of the candles (which, in the set as we have arranged it, are on the table and above the fire-place). If our first border is divided into sections, we may get our effect from it; otherwise, we may enclose our lamps in a cylinder or box, so that the light is concentrated on the space around the candles. In regard to the lighted candles, we will find it better for the eyes of the

audience if we use a shade or shield on each candle between the flame and the audience. As most of the action transpires around the table and the fireplace, this lighting may prove sufficient, though we can rarely be sure of our lighting until we have experimented with it.

Near the climax of the play, one more lighting effect is necessary: an illusion of the light which shines from the orange-red hair of the girl when she stands revealed as the will-o'-the-wisp. The color of her hair gives us a dramatic break in our gray color scheme. The light—an amber or orange—may accentuate this break. But how can this light be arranged? It may be possible to throw a light from above; but if this is impracticable, the light may come from the stairway down R.

Now for the costumes. We shall be able to carry our monochromatic color scheme into our costumes. We can dress the country woman in dark gray with a gray-black apron; the white-faced girl in a lighter gray than the scenery; the poet's wife and her maid in black and white. The poet's wife changes to a white robe during the action of the play. We shall have the maid carry a black bag, which, when she sets it down near the left wall, will tend to balance the gray-black of the fireplace. In design, our costumes must not

be fantastic, but will be a bit out of the prevailing fashion.

We are now ready for final rehearsals with scenery, lights, costumes, and actors. We shall find, unquestionably, that adjustments have to be made. We shall find it difficult to follow the movements of the girl with the spotlight without making the audience conscious of the electrician. We may offset this difficulty somewhat by weaving into the hair of the girl strands of bright tinsel which catch the light and focus attention. We may not be able to follow the author's directions about the light outside which grows smaller and smaller after the two figures have disappeared. It may be better to let the audience imagine this light; or, we may use a small spotlight off stage which casts its light in the doorway after the two figures have gone out, becoming dimmer and dimmer as they approach the cliff. The music, also, may give us some difficulty; we shall probably decide that a muted violin is most satisfactory.

Perfecting our stage effects and making these minor adjustments should not be discouraging work; to use the closing line of one of Galsworthy's plays: "That's where the fun comes in."

CHAPTER VI

PRODUCTION FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE ACTOR

It is strange that the romantic story of the actor has never been adequately told. There is no figure more picturesque, more illusive, more compact of the stuff of romance; no character so contradictory, so real when he is pretending, so artificial when he is posing as himself; no one who has suffered more keenly from the cruelty of those whom he has freely served, and who has received so slight and trumpery a reward for his services; no one who is more cold and distant, but who is none the less full of simple, lovable qualities. He has the swagger of the egotist without his evil heart; the deviltry of the villain without his criminal nature. His vices, like those of the Jew, have been imposed upon him through ostracism and pogrom. Without him, drama would be a cold corpse in a rich sarcophagus; without him, the whole world would be poorer in gaiety, good will and imagination.

Such a figure appeals to us. He represents the romance of the theatre. The majority of us do

not feel that we can become playwrights, and only a few of us hear the call to become directors; but most of us feel that we can act and want to act. The acting instinct is the common property of mankind, and has been since the early days of recorded history. The appeal of the actor's art is strong, the glamour of the footlights alluring, the applause of the crowd sweet to the ear. But before we decide whether or not we should obey our instinct, before we can know how far this strong instinct for mimicry is prophetic of success as an actor, let us examine ourselves after the manner in which we examined the prospective director.

1. Prerequisites of the Actor

The first question for me to ask is this: why do I want to act? Is it because I envy someone who has looked pretty and won applause on the local stage? Is it because I think acting is easy and loads of fun? Is it because I have pondered over the pictures of movie and stage actors, and dreamed about them, and want to be like them, or pretend that I am like them? Is it to satisfy my own vanity? Let me be fair and honest with myself in this matter. Let me admit that if some such reasons as the foregoing prompted my desire, I do not want to act at all, but merely to show off. I must realize that acting is very dif-

ficult, that it requires special gifts and talents together with long years of training, that its triumphs are few and its failures many, and that whatever feeble applause I win will be small payment for my days of the hardest kind of work. Having realized thoroughly what the actor's job really is, then let me ask myself: Do I still want to act? And if my answer is in the affirmative, I may now inquire whether or not I possess the prerequisites necessary to the actor.

First, have I a good body; not necessarily a beautiful body, nor a well trained body, but a strong body, one which is not defective, which is responsive to my will, and which can be brought under its control.

Have I a good voice? It is not necessary that I have a highly trained voice when I begin to work; but I should have a voice which under proper training, will meet the demands for clarity, power, change in speech and tone, and variety in emotions; and I should be sure that my voice is so naturally placed that it can be used for long periods without showing fatigue.

Have I "heart?" Is my emotional self alive? Do I feel? Am I sympathetic towards life? And closely allied to "heart" is sensitiveness. Am I sensitive to people, and can I, being sensitive, establish through my "heart" a sympathetic relationship with people? I may be intelligent,

brilliant, and clever; I may possess a dozen other qualities which stamp me as an interesting individual; but if I have not "heart" and sensitiveness, I can never go far as an actor.

Again, have I imagination? When I read over a part does the part live for me? Do I visualize the character, hear his voice, see his movements? Do I see him in situations other than those in the play? Does the character interest me? Do I invent business for him? Does he grow in my mind?

Lastly, am I sure that I do not possess any marked, fixed mannerisms which cannot be thrown off, any consciousness of self which cannot be lost in the part I am creating? If my personality and mannerisms constantly intrude, I can never create a convincing character.

So, if I recognize the difficulties of the actor's art and still hold to my desire to undertake it, and if I find that I am gifted with a sound body, a good voice, "heart," sensitiveness, imagination, and an ability to submerge my own personality in the personality of another, I may feel justified in trying to become an actor. Understand, I may appear on the stage without one or more or all of these qualities; many an egotistical, harsh-voiced, phlegmatic, self-conscious performer is strutting about our amateur stages, irritating audiences, and doing his bit to justify a low opinion of

amateur drama. But such people are not actors, and we cannot spend time on them in this discussion. They are slowly but surely being separated from the sincere non-professional who loves the actor's art, and, recognizing its difficulties, works whole-heartedly to overcome them.

2. Body and Voice

Physical education has gained ground with such rapidity that it seems unnecessary to call attention to a sound body. Let us summarize all that we shall say about the body in one or two statements. Without a sound body, properly educated, all attainments of intellect and culture, all sensitiveness of spirit, may be so blurred by the imperfections of this instrument of expression, that very little of the actor's honest intentions will be conveyed to the audience. The education of the body embraces the training of the whole physical man; the control of every muscle and the command of a voice responsive to every wish of the actor.

If the student of acting aims, not at making a hit, but at a mastery of his art, he will devote some time each day to rhythmic gymnastics, dancing and fencing. Walking, standing, sitting, will become for him, not haphazard or unconscious actions, but movements in an art. Grace and

poise, conscious at first, but growing more and more unconscious, will be his.

Some of this may strike the beginning actor as unnecessary, even absurd; but let us remind him that we are now considering the amateur who wants to grow into an actor with a body trained for dramatic expression.

A few aspiring actors will find themselves equipped by nature and good habits with a well-developed body. Far fewer will find themselves in possession of a good speaking voice. And even though a voice be naturally clear and resonant, intelligent management of that voice is necessary if it is to be effective under the changes in emotion, demands of characterization, and the differences found in stages and auditoriums.

The beginning actor who is not blessed with a good natural voice has a long, hard road to travel; not an impossible road, but one which handicaps his progress severely. A good voice is a necessity, and the development of a voice requires constant, intelligent practice through many months.

(a) building a good speaking voice

While making no attempt to outline a course in voice development, we may suggest certain fundamentals to the actor who is desirous of improving his voice, but who is without the opportunity

for doing so. If it is possible, let the actor take his voice difficulties to some good teacher. In this matter of voice teacher, there is only one piece of advice to give: the best is none too good. If a good teacher is not available, he may find help in the following analysis.

A good speaking voice depends, primarily, upon four things: breath control, relaxation, form, and placement. We shall consider these in the order named.

Good breathing is the foundation for all voice building. Without breath control the making of tone is an uncertain thing, and clearness is impossible. Without economy of breath, which depends upon a knowledge of breath control, long speeches or speeches which build to a climax, cannot be effectively spoken.

From our experience, we have found the common faults of breathing to be: (a) breathing with the top of the lungs, that is, rarely taking a full breath which will so fill the air chamber as to depress the diaphragm and expand the sides; (b) breathing rapidly and irregularly; (c) endeavoring to control the flow of breath by a contraction of the throat muscles.

These faults may be corrected by a daily practice of the following exercises: (a) Place the fleshy part of the palms of the hands against the floating ribs, with fingers extended outward. Inhale

deeply. If the effort widens the space between your finger tips, you have depressed your diaphragm. If on the contrary your chest has risen but no change takes place where your hands rest, you must try again. Hold the chest high, and as you inhale, think *down* and *out*. Every inhalation should expand the body at the region of the diaphragm; every exhalation should contract it to a position of ease. (b) Lie flat on your back. Inhale while counting six (silently), then exhale while counting the same number. Increase the number of counts in your exhalation until you exhale in twelve counts. Repeat the exercise sitting. Repeat standing erect. (c) Inhale as in exercise (a), then exhale slowly, speaking the syllable "ho" on the flowing breath. See to it that you emit a steady sound with no more force when you begin the syllable than when you finish it.

Inability to secure the relaxation necessary to good vocal production is usually due to nervousness, or to a habit which owes its origin to nervousness. Any muscular straining of the body will interfere with the building of a good voice. The tension areas most immediately affecting the voice are in the throat, tongue, jaws, and the back of the neck.

The muscles of the jaws and the back of the neck are easily trained to relaxation. Keen men-

tal watchfulness and simple exercises—rolling the head about on the neck as a pivot, opening and closing the mouth easily and rapidly, moving the jaws from side to side—will usually produce a state of relaxation in these areas. The throat presents a more difficult problem. This is due, perhaps, to our erroneous feeling that to produce tone we must *do something* with our throats. Nothing could be more untrue. The throat must be open and free from all muscular effort. No exercise induces this state more readily than yawning. Yawn, then before you have lost the sense of throat ease, speak the word "home." Repeat it. Try to speak a short sentence, a longer one, a short paragraph. Whenever the throat loses the feeling of complete ease, yawn, and begin again. Sometimes the tongue rises in the mouth, obstructing free passage of tone. It is not necessary for a normal speaker to give any thought to the action of his tongue in making "tongue" sounds, but if his tongue is not relaxed when it has no work to do, it must be trained to relaxation. Think the syllable "hum," speak it silently, then aloud, being sure to drop the jaw well and easily. Note that the tongue lies relaxed in the mouth, the tip gently touching the lower front teeth. This should always be its position when not called upon to assist in making a "tongue" sound. Many people have acquired the habit of "clear-

ing" the throat whenever assailed by a nervous feeling. This is a very bad practice, detrimental to good tone and clear speech. Learn to swallow when you feel the impulse to "clear" the throat. Swallowing is a good relaxing exercise.

The production of good tone is dependent upon correct form and placement. By correct form is meant the shape and flexibility of the lips; by placement is meant a sense of the place where tone becomes articulate.

Common faults of form are; (a) the lips held against the teeth, (b) the opening of the lips being made horizontally by a pulling back of the corners of the mouth, (c) too small an aperture. Exercise for faults of form: Study the mouth in a mirror while speaking; learn to open the mouth well; lift the lips away from the teeth and flare them slightly; make modifications of tone by increasing the aperture vertically or by lifting the lips more freely from the teeth, not by a pulling back of the corners of the mouth; strive to keep the corners forward and to secure an oval opening. Whistling is a simple and effective exercise.

Common faults in placement result in guttural speech when the vocalizing begins in the throat, and in "mushy" speech when vocalization begins in the mouth. These faults may be overcome by a constant mental picturing of tone as beginning on the lips, and by a practicing of the following exer-

cises: Repeat the syllable "wō" until you feel that the "o" is inseparable from the "w." "W," it is easily understood and felt, *is* made on the lips. When you can make a clear and perfect "wō," try, "wạ" "wā" "wē," wī." Continue until you have combined all the consonants with these vowel sounds: bō, bạ, bā, bē, bī, etc. Then practice words involving these combinations of consonant and vowel sounds: won't, want, wait, weep, wide; bōne, bạ-bạ, bāne, bēet, bīde, etc.

Good breathing and clear, unrestricted tone do much toward making a good voice, but they do not assure good speech nor speech that is easily understood. The criticism that the actor did not "talk loud enough" is often made. Only a few amateur actors fail to make themselves heard because they do not speak loudly enough; most of them fail because of poor articulation and enunciation.

By enunciation is here meant a clear, full utterance of the vowels. You should, by constant attention, and by giving more time to the forming of vowels, be able to improve your enunciation without further suggestion. The preceding paragraph on placement should be helpful.

By articulation is meant the distinct utterance of the consonants. Poor articulation is usually the result of carelessness. Care in finishing each word soon improves our articulation. The sounds needing especial attention are final "t,"

"d," "ng"; and "wh" at the beginning of words.

As we stated at the beginning of this section, the actor should, if possible, enlist the services of the finest voice expert in his community, for he sets out upon a delicate quest when he begins his training for a "practical" and pleasing voice.

Let the actor never be persuaded that voice training is superfluous and unnecessary to acting. For a few decades voice has been slighted, due, in large measure, to the overrating of vocal effects during the vogue of the elocutionary actor of the nineteenth century; but having completed our swing to the other extreme of the pendulum's arc, we are returning to an interest in, and a respect for voice. As the general level of production has advanced, correct diction, beauty of tone, and range of voice, have been demanded. The non-professional of today, if his work is to measure up to the standard set for him, must have the quality and range found in a voice which does not grow monotonous, and he must also have the technique and control which enable him to speak in the "natural" manner decreed by our present stage convention—a manner which, incidentally, is not natural but which gives a convincing illusion of naturalness.

Perhaps no better conclusion could be made to these brief suggestions regarding the importance of voice and its training, than to quote from

William Winter, probably the greatest of our native dramatic critics. He has written: "The voice is the exponent of the soul. You can paint your face; you can pad your person; you can wear a wig; you can walk in shoes that augment your height; you can, in various ways, change your body; but your voice will, sooner or later, reveal you as you are. Just as the style of the writer discloses his character, so the quality of voice discloses the actor's nature."

3. The Actor's Questions

The training of which we have been speaking is preliminary to the actual work of acting. We must now take it for granted that the actor either has had the advantage of voice training, or at the least, that he has a good, natural voice, and pass on to some of the common questions connected with the acting craft. We are aware that acting is an art; but acting, like the other arts, has its craftsmanship, its technique. And while the art of acting cannot be taught, a number of suggestions may be offered which will improve the craftsmanship.

(a) how shall I create character?

At the outset, there may be those who object to the phrase "creation of character"; for there

are people who deny the actor the right to the title of creative artist. But even if we deny the actor the creative right, we know that we must rely on him for an interpretation of the word portraits of the writer, for a transformation of the printed page into life; and since the phrase is in common usage, we shall employ it in this discussion.

It is in this creation of character that the present day actor's intelligence and imagination meet their most exacting test, his spirit finds its greatest joy, and the modern art of acting wins its loudest applause. Are there any rules which may be followed with profit in this work of creation? Probably there are not. But by analyzing the course which the actor either unconsciously or consciously takes in his creation and building of character, the amateur may discover certain facts which he can apply to the solution of his individual problems.

The character first lives in the imagination. But the imagination alone can never create the actual character. The first thing necessary to this process of creation is understanding, and understanding is reached through mental effort. Just how does he gain this understanding? He gains it through a study of the author's description of the character, through the stage directions, the actions of the character, and the reaction of

other people in the play to the character; but most of the understanding is gained through a study of the character's lines.

Suppose the actor is to undertake the character of Ferrand in Galsworthy's "The Pigeon." Galsworthy tells us that Ferrand is an alien, a vagabond; Wellwyn, the artist, reacts sympathetically towards him because of Ferrand's humanity and philosophy; his own actions give us his lack of adherence to the accepted moral code, and his general worthlessness; while his lines show us his philosophy, his frankness, his cynicism, and verify the points in his character which we have discovered through the other means.

If the actor has chosen Marchbanks in Bernard Shaw's "Candida," he must understand a very different and a more subtle character. Through his lines and actions, and through Morell's declarations, we discover that Marchbanks is a "snivelling, cowardly little whelp," a "nervous disease," and that he is effeminate and immature physically; his lines tell us something else about him: he has a sharp and penetrating mind, and a knack for seeing the truth in things; while his actions show us further that mentally he is not snivelling nor cowardly, but very brave. Having discovered these contradictory facts in his nature, we may feel that we understand his character. But what about Candida's reaction towards him?

Do the qualities we have discovered account for her interest in him, an interest which is something more than motherly? As we turn to our study again, we see that Marchbanks has a poetic nature which is honest and wholesome and fascinating; we see something of the spirit of Keats and Chatterton alive in the youth.

So, through a study of the entire play we come to know Ferrand in "The Pigeon" as a cynic, a vagabond, as possessing a keen philosophic mind, and a sense of humor, as a weakling, but at the same time a colorful, sympathetic human wreck; and through a study of "Candida" we come to know Marchbanks as physically weak, nervous, effeminate, as keen minded and capable of holding his own in mental combat, as possessing the engaging soul of a poet. Clear comprehension is at the basis of character interpretation; yet how many amateurs set to work on a play with no clearly defined idea of what they mean to do or what they mean to be.

Having achieved as complete an understanding of the play as is possible for us, which should mean a clear visualization of the physical, mental, and spiritual person, our next question is: Have we the knowledge and the technique for an interpretation of this character? In order to interpret Ferrand we must know something of the nature and the habits of the vagabond; we must under-

stand wanderlust, and hunger, and poverty; we must know the characteristics of the Frenchman and of the Cockney; and we must be able to speak in a dialect which will be a combination of the French and the Cockney. Have we the knowledge and technique necessary for this interpretation? In respect to Marchbanks, we must realize a fine mind set in a weak, undeveloped body, a personality dominated at intervals by a poetic soul, and we must keep the character always convincingly English. Have we the equipment necessary for the interpretation of the three-fold nature of this character?

Let us believe that through travel, study, imagination and training we have the knowledge and technique required for the creation of one of these characters. Let us choose Ferrand. Our task now becomes one which is difficult of explanation; for, throughout days and days we are now directing our efforts towards the obliteration of our own personality: our physical characteristics, our way of thinking, our spirit,—and now are creeping, almost literally, under the skin and into the heart and mind of this colorful, cynical human wreck. Just what takes place and how it takes place is not so easy of analysis.

Certainly in this creation of character it is better to work from the inside out; the body will respond *in character* to a mind and spirit which

are in character. This mind and spirit are brought into character through every available source; through reading the character emotionally, through studying it mentally; through acquiring a knowledge of actual vagabonds, actual Frenchmen and actual Cockneys; through a study of the pertinent characteristics of Ferrand which can be discovered, here and there, in actual people about us; through our feelings, through our imaginations, through our minds. It may be that the passing weeks will seem to promise no reward when suddenly, almost miraculously, the actor will find himself to be Ferrand; or perhaps he will momentarily grasp and live the character, only to slip out of it in the next speech and find himself unable to recapture it during the entire rehearsal; or again he may grow into the character so gradually that he feels no change, until one day he realizes that the change has been wrought and he is Ferrand.

The task imposed in the creation of character presupposes those qualifications already spoken of, together with some knowledge of technique. Creating a character includes a study of the part, observation of life, frequent discussions with the director; it includes jumping recklessly at the character, and approaching it slowly and analytically; it includes overplaying and underplaying; it includes the use of every device and means which

the ingenuity of director and actor can bring to the problem.

The characterization is not ready for public appearance when the actor has made it his own; the play was not written solely for this character, but the character for the play. So the actor must now take this character which he has created and put him in his proper place in relation to the other characters and to the play as a whole. But the question of the relation of one character to another will constitute a separate discussion which will be taken up later.

(B) SHALL I FEEL THE EMOTIONS?

Many a famous actor has given an answer to this question. If all the answers were collected, we would find perhaps half the actors answering the question with the word "No;" the other half, with the word "Yes."

For example, Talma, the French actor of the time of Napoleon, says: ". . . to form a great actor, the union of sensibility and intelligence is required." But Constant Coquelin, his countryman, declares, "I am convinced that one can only be a great actor on conditions of complete self-mastery and ability to express feelings which are not experienced, which may never be experienced,

which from the very nature of things never can be experienced." Henry Irving, the English actor, argues the point with Coquelin: "It is necessary to warn you against the theory, expounded with brilliant ingenuity by Diderot, that the actor never feels. . . . Has not the actor who can make his feelings a part of his art an advantage over the actor who never feels?" The theory referred to by Sir Henry was Diderot the French philosopher's statement: "In complete insensibility is the possibility of a sublime actor." But Adelaide Ristori, the Italian actress, raises her voice in contradiction when she says, "We, on the contrary, do not believe that in culminating passion this self-possession is possible." Joseph Jefferson once criticized an actor's work, saying, "You mustn't cry on the stage. . . . If you do not control yourself, how can you expect to control your audience?" But Ellen Terry frequently wept on the stage, and her audiences wept with her.

Louis Calvert, the English-American actor, following the cue suggested in Irving's quotation, attempts to reconcile the two opposing views. "There are times when he (the actor) must appear so blinded with rage that he must commit murder; can that passion literally be felt by the actor? It seems to me that all passion must be kept under a

certain control and within the pale of art. It is also evident that to maintain this control of necessity grows more difficult as the actor gains in his power to express great passion . . . In the rehearsing we may do in private it is perhaps well to give way to uncontrolled passion to develop our power of expressing it; but while acting we must always remain master of our resources. . . . Ristori was able to throw her whole passionate soul into her emotional scenes, because she knew quite well that her technique could not desert her."

Perhaps to the novice who knows not which side to take, the best advice would be to follow the suggestion of Calvert. Certainly no beginner is possessed of sufficient technique to simulate emotions successfully; and any such attempt may lead him into make-believe, artifice, and trickery. How can he move an audience if he is not first moved himself?

But let him bear in mind the other part of this quotation from Calvert. Unbridled, uncontrolled emotion is not art and it annoys the audience. The actor should be keenly attuned to emotion, should feel emotion and should express it; but he should never let it control him; his mind should ever be the ward of his emotions; he should always be conscious of his actions.

(c) MUST I REMEMBER OR FORGET MY AUDIENCE?

We have all been eavesdroppers to bits of conversation between amateur actors which ran something like this:

"You know, I kept thinking about the audience all the time, and it worried the life out of me."

"My stars! They never worried me. Why, I never knew they were there!"

Should one be aware of his audience or should he not? Is either of these actors in the right? In answering this question it may be more profitable to talk about the relationship of actor and audience in a general, and at times, a theoretical way, and allow the individual actor to deduce whatever he is able from the discussion.

There is a common agreement on the point that man has both a conscious and a subconscious mind. Immediately before the play, if I am a sensitive actor, one of my minds is usually concerned with the audience I am soon to face. I may be so busy that my conscious mind does not consider the audience at all; but my subconscious does, and I am reminded of this by flashes in my conscious mind, and by my nervousness and irritability.

When I go on the stage I am immediately affected by the audience. I "feel" my audience,

as they say. This sensing of an audience is a good thing and a natural experience of all actors. It seems to tell us that the connection has been established between our two emotional natures. As the act proceeds, we may forget this "feel," but it is quite possible that our subconscious mind is still in touch with the audience, for in the moments when our conscious mind is made aware of it, we realize that we have been following the reaction of the audience to the play all along. The reverse of this may be true in extraordinary cases. That is, our conscious mind may be so much and so constantly aware of the audience, that our subconscious mind has to take care of our acting. This second condition is bad if we are engaged in emotional acting; for, as stated before, we should never relax a conscious guard over our emotions.

Our aim, when acting, is to produce an emotional response in our audience. Now this response may be aroused by *our* emotionalized condition, or it may be aroused by the words which we are delivering and the manner of delivery. The first case is usually found in serious plays, the second in comedy. If I am arousing my audience through my emotionalized self, I not only need my conscious mind to serve as guard, but I need to dismiss the audience from my thoughts so that my

emotion will ring true and my impersonation will be more convincing; but if I am rousing my audience through the lines of the author, a process which calls for pause, inflection, stress,—in other words, for a technical handling which cannot be completely determined before I go on the stage, —then I must keep my audience in mind in order to ascertain, at any moment, how my lines are getting over. In both cases I am sensitive to my audience; but in the second case, I am not only sensitive, but am consciously aware of it. In serious plays the interest is cumulative and calls for but little expression or interpretation on the part of the audience save in the climactic moments; in comedy the expression of interest is constant. In serious plays the response is not so obvious as in comedy, in which the actor has to be ready for interruptions in his lines and business.

From this discussion it may be possible to make a general statement which must admit of exceptions in individual cases and with individual temperaments: at all times I am more or less sensitive to my audience; in serious plays I would do well to keep my conscious mind off the audience as much as possible; but in comedy, in order to direct and point my lines, in order to "get my laughs," I need to be mentally aware of its presence.

(D) HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY READING OF LINES?

We must not stop here for a discussion of the reading of lines in the larger matters of characterization, interpretation, and emotional content; through sincere, effective reading accompanied by bodily action, these important things are revealed to the mind and heart of the audience—this is understood. But what of the technique of reading lines? Here is a matter which is often slighted by the beginner. Technically, the spoken lines become the rails upon which the dramatic train speeds onward; and unless the track be straight and without flaw, the train cannot proceed on its course steadily and rapidly.

What are some of the common faults in this matter of saying lines? There is the habit of faulty diction which need not take our time. There is a tendency to relax near the end of a speech, letting it drop so that it is scarcely audible to the audience. Instead of doing this, the actor should strive to do the opposite. And not only must the final word have strength and audibility, it must be spoken in a manner to challenge the speech of the next actor; for even if the final words are delivered in a strong voice, the delivery may be such that it breaks up an entity or drops the drama, then and there, when it should

lead the drama into the next speech. An actor's speech may not be an entity in itself. The entity may consist of the last part of his speech and the first part of the speech which follows. This is worth remembering. Let the actor look for the last thought in his speech and the first thought in the next speech and see if they do not call for a unification in delivery; and let him do his share in binding the two together as two rails are bound together in the track.

This brings us to the next speaker. If the rails are to hold he must do his share of the binding. This is not saying anything new; it asks for but little more than has been asked by despairing directors since the beginning of time. What actor's ears are not dulled to the command: "Pick up your cues! Pick up your cues!"

Sometimes the director is asked: "To whom shall I say the lines?" This ought to be an absurd question, but when books containing hints on acting still admonish actors to occasionally read their lines to the audience, it appears that some of the bad practices of the declamatory school of last century are still with us. Ordinarily an actor should direct his lines to the character whom he is addressing; at any rate, he should speak his lines from the position in which he naturally finds himself; that is, he should never, save in exceptional cases, assume the posi-

tion of a public speaker. To do otherwise, breaks the illusion. The above suggestion applies even to the soliloquy.

Occasionally the actor finds himself asked to read lines which are not phrased in his familiar idiom (in a period play or in an unusual character part, to name instances), whereupon he declares: "I can't say that line naturally. It has no reality." What will be helpful in such a case? One suggestion is for him to translate the line into his own idiom, and there realize its truth and reality; and then, holding fast to its content, its truth, translate it back into the speech tune of the character.

The questions of time and rhythm, also important in the technique of reading, will be taken up under a separate heading.

(E) WHAT OF MOVING ABOUT AND STANDING STILL?

In his study periods the actor must take note of the fact that when he is on the stage he is being watched. The audience, interested in the drama and straining forward, eager for any clue to the development of events, will not let his movements pass unnoticed. They watch his body. They expect (because of theatre tradition) that every movement he makes will carry to them some

meaning. For this reason, the actor's stage movements must be purposeful. The purpose of movement must be interpreted broadly; but it does not include aimless and superfluous movement; it denotes that movement shall be reduced to a minimum and shall be thought out carefully. How often is aimless movement confusing and misleading; how frequently does it destroy the picture or betray a lack of understanding of the character.

From the foregoing paragraph it appears that much of the time an actor is on the stage he should be standing or sitting still. And this is asking something very difficult of him. He feels that he is acting only when he is moving about, or shaking his head, or rolling his eyes. But he must remember that he is not the whole cast, and that it would be well, if he has nothing of purpose to convey to the audience, for him to give the audience a chance to forget about him. This does not mean that he should drop out of the play. On the stage the actors are simulating spirited conversation, and in conversation he is expected to listen as well as to move about and speak. Therefore, let him learn how to listen, attentively, to the other speakers. By listening or being quietly aware of what is going on he will not detract from the speech of a fellow player, or a bit of action, or whatever is the important business

of the moment; but he can concentrate on it and so help direct the attention of the audience to it.

A good actor often stands out from a bad actor through his purposeful movement and his ability to do nothing effectively.

(f) WHAT ABOUT TEAM WORK?

Each actor's work is a part of a larger unit; if he overacts or if he underacts, he is not fitting his work into this unit.

No actor can play his part alone; he needs the response and support of all the other actors; actors must depend upon one another.

Subordination of self to the will of the play is the only course leading to a successful production.

An actor is either helping the play or detracting from its effect every moment he is on the stage.

An actor may ruin an entire scene and bring disaster to the work of the entire company by a bad bit of business or by reading a line out of key.

Such axioms as the above (and they could be multiplied) should impress one thought on the mind of the sincere amateur: the absolute necessity for team work. A director must have team work. An actor must become one of the team and submit to the training rules. This is hard

for the egotist, and the egotist is not unknown among actors. But if the actor is not willing to fit into his position, filling it and no more; if he is not willing to support his team mates, then it is the director's business to make him do so or remove him from the cast. This one thought has to be kept in mind: the play, to be a success, must have team work.

(G) WHAT OF THE TIME AND RHYTHM SENSES?

Because the principles of time and rhythm require a fuller explanation than may be given here, they will not be discussed but only brought to the attention of the actor.

It is an easily discovered fact that only a few actors have a time sense, and a still smaller number have a rhythm sense. An ear, finely attuned to time, combined with a sensitiveness to the tempo of a speech and its accompanying pauses, is usually absent. Amateurs rush a speech or slow it up, as though tempo had no dramatic value; they pause too long or omit the pause altogether, seemingly oblivious to the fact that there is a length of pause which is most effective.

And, as said, fewer yet have a sense of rhythm. Even prose becomes more vital and significant when a cadence creeps into the reading. A realistic play will gain in emphasis by attention

to rhythm. As for poetry, it vibrates with rhythm, it is rhythmically alive, yet it is frequently read with no more sensitiveness to its rhythms than if it were the laundry list.

This may appear as something too technical or advanced for the amateur. But let him keep in mind that the amateur is no longer the ignorant player he was a generation ago. He has learned much and he must not stop with what he has already learned. Among the things awaiting his study are the time and rhythm senses. With a mastery of the time sense his work will become more dramatically effective; with a mastery of the rhythm sense, more dramatically forceful and beautiful.

4. The Subject of Make-Up

Learning to make-up is similar in many respects to learning to paint scenery. As it is impossible to give a course in scene painting between the covers of a book, so is it impossible to teach make-up from the printed page. When one has make-up materials at hand he may demonstrate clearly many points, and his lecture-demonstration may possess much of practical value. In a book he must confine himself to fundamentals and generalities, and keep reminding his reader that as each face is an exception to the average (which

only exists in theory), the generalities will need to be modified with each individual case.

(A) MODERN MAKE-UP AND THE MAKE-UP OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

One thing which the writer may do is contrast the practice of make-up today with the practice of the middle of the nineteenth century, in the hope that the contrast will make the actor more appreciative of the tremendous aid to characterization and illusion which present day methods and materials have given him.

In the days of Jefferson and Booth, make-up materials were primitive and unsatisfactory. For ground colors, the actor used prepared chalks, powders, and dry tints, purchased at a drug store or paint shop; for liners he used the charred ends of burnt matches or hair pins and needles blackened over a lamp; and for dark skinned character parts he could cover his face with burnt umber or balseminia, and with burnt cork. If we add to these simple materials carmine, rouge, and "a small black crayon made in France," his make-up box is practically complete.

He was better off in the matter of wigs, for wig-making is an old and highly developed profession; but his beards were as crude as his make-up. Colored wool was used for beards. It was stuck

to the face quickly after the face had been rubbed with fish lime which had been dissolved in the heat of a lamp or a gas jet.

Making up in those days must have been far from pleasant, and it could not have been an inspiring or pleasant preparation for an appearance on the stage. However, such make-up as was possible may have been sufficient for the inadequately lighted stage, and the actors bore with it as a necessary annoyance. But greater illusion and artistry were demanded when the stage grew brighter with the improvements in gas lighting, and later when it was flooded with light from calcium and incandescent lamps. The new and highly satisfactory method came from Germany. Just who was the first to use the materials of make-up as we know them is a disputed question, the honors being divided between C. Herbert of Berlin, and Carl Bandius of the Leipzig Stadt Theatre.

The new method was the result of the development of grease paint. Though we still may use a powder make-up, the grease paint make-up has become so common that when we speak of make-up today we need not specify that we refer to the grease paint method. Grease paint is used throughout the world by professionals and amateurs. Since its introduction there has followed a great improvement in theatrical make-up, until

now, even though the company be composed of amateurs and the place be far away from theatrical centers, the audience expects the actors to present to them a convincing facial illusion of the characters they are portraying.

What are the advantages of grease paint make-up? The paints are easy to put on and easy to take off. The standard brands are harmless to the skin; more than this, the manufacturers declare that they are beneficial to the skin. They make it possible for a middle-aged person to appear young when playing a youthful part. They blend well, and are especially useful in blending the pate of the wig with the forehead. They cover up minor facial blemishes. Best of all, they have made make-up an art. No character is too individual in its mask, too extraordinary in its facial features, to escape reproduction by the make-up artist. That grease paint make-up is a great aid to the actor in creating his character illusion requires no proof from us; and since illusion is demanded on the stage and probably shall be for a number of years, the place of make-up in the process of production seems secure.

(B) THE MAKE-UP BOX

Before we can begin our experimentation with make-up, we must supply ourselves with certain

materials. We shall begin, therefore, by filling our make-up box, putting in everything necessary for almost any occasion, even though we recognize that a less complete equipment would be sufficient for ordinary use; indeed, half a dozen ground colors, some rouge, and cans of cold cream and powder, are adequate for many plays.

At the drug store, costume or make-up house, or wherever we have gone for our materials, we purchase the following:

1. A number of sticks of ground or flesh color, which come in large round sticks and in all flesh shades ranging from white, through "natural flesh" and "deeper shade" to "healthy sunburn." The ground colors also include sallow and ruddy old age, Gypsy, Othello, Chinese, Indian, and East Indian. We shall put in a complete assortment.
2. A half dozen lining colors which come in sticks like the ground tones, but not so thick. We shall choose black, dark gray, light gray, light brown, blue, and white. If we care to, we may add crimson, carmine, ultramarine and yellow, but since these are rarely used, we can do without them.
3. Several boxes of powder to match the more usable ground tones. We shall find

that we want white, pink flesh tint, brunette flesh tint, sunburn, and gray. The white is applied to Pierrot and clown make-ups; pink flesh and brunette to straight make-ups; sunburn darkens the complexion and is used for making hollow cheeks and eyes; while the gray gives the appearance of unshaven faces, and also can be used for hollows in the cheeks and neck. There are other powders such as ruddy rouge, Chinese, and Indian, but it is not necessary to include them in our box.

4. We had best put in some liquid colors which are applied to the neck, arms, and hands where grease paint would soil in coming in contact with the clothes. Several shades may be purchased, but ordinary flesh will perhaps be all we shall have need for.
5. A small jar of lip rouge to give color and expression to the lips and mouth.
6. Blonde and brunette powder rouge for the cheeks.
7. A few cakes of either water cosmetique (white, black, brown, and auburn) or mascaro (white and black) for changing the color of the hair, eyebrows, and beard.

This may complete our list of actual make-up material, but we shall need several items before our box is ready for the theatre.

8. We shall need a jar (or can) of theatrical cold cream. Cold cream is applied to the face before making up and is also used in removing the grease paint. A bar of cocoa butter, if we prefer it, can be used for the removal of the paint.
9. We shall also need lining sticks and powder puffs. For lining we can use orange sticks or artist's stumps, and in case we have neither, sharpened matches and toothpicks are satisfactory. Since we are assembling a complete equipment, we shall put in two or three orange sticks and two or three stumps. We should have a medium sized, wool powder puff for each of our powders, and one or two large puffs. Hare's feet are also serviceable in applying powder for hollows and for rouging the cheeks, and we shall add two hare's feet.

A make-up box containing the above named material will be found adequate for almost any type of character. We

have not, however, taken care of the question of beards.

10. Beards on wire are unsatisfactory, so we shall have none of them; but if our pocket book will still permit of it, we shall put in two or three beards and a half dozen moustaches on gauze. These are easily put on, easily trimmed, can be used over and over, and give a very natural appearance. Crêpe hair is also serviceable for making beards and moustaches. We shall take half a yard each of black, dark brown, iron gray, and white. (Crêpe hair comes in tight strands.) For sticking on either the hair or gauze, we shall need a bottle of spirit gum; and for its removal, a bottle of alcohol.

11. Still one more article should be put in: a can of nose putty which is used to build out the nose and chin to any desired shape.

12. We have now finished our purchasing; but on our way to the theatre we stop at our homes and get a comb and a pair of scissors. With these we complete our equipment and we are ready to begin work.

(c) STRAIGHT MAKE-UP

Before we begin making up we should remember two important points: the color of the light and the intensity of the light in which we are going to act. We have spoken before of colors which bring out and colors which kill one another. The whole question of the qualities and properties of colors becomes vital to the actor in making up. For instance, red lips and rouged cheeks under a blue light will appear grayish-black; bluish-gray shadows will be changed to a deep slate under a strong amber. The intensity of light likewise affects make-up. If the lights are strong, and the actors near the audience, the make-up must be soft, and carefully blended, shaded, and lined; if the lights are dim and the audience removed some distance from the actors, the make-up may be more accentuated in color, the high-lights and shades more pronounced, and the blending more crude.

Still a third point may be mentioned at this time: a point concerning the source of the light. If an actor is playing in strong foots and dim borders, certain unnatural high-lights and shadows appear on his face; if he is playing in strong top lights and dim foots, other portions of his face are high-lighted and shadowed.

In the experiments which follow, we shall consider the most common stage lighting: both foots

and borders, with white or straw lamps, of moderate intensity; and we shall consider our stage and auditorium to be of medium size, leaving the actor to experiment by himself with his make-up under different light and distance conditions.

By a straight make-up is meant, not a make-up which changes one's natural features, but one which, without attempt at characterization, serves to emphasize one's natural features. It is the simplest kind of make-up, but will serve for a demonstration of the use of our materials.

As a preparation, the male actors should shave several hours, but not immediately, before making up.

The actor, sitting at the make-up table with a good light and a good mirror before him, begins by applying a thin coating of cold cream to his face and neck. This is worked in well, then rubbed off so that the face does not appear greasy. This application will protect the skin and aid in the removal of the paint. The ground color is then selected. The tint of the ground color depends upon the age and type of character to be portrayed, and upon the light and theatre conditions before mentioned. We shall choose Deeper Shade (commonly called Number 5) ground color. The stick is rubbed lightly over the face and neck. We must be careful not to put it on too thick, otherwise we will take away the expression from

the face; and we must blend it in, being sure that the paint covers the neck and ears. If the paint stops at the jaw line, our make-up will give the face the appearance of a mask. The paint is rubbed in with the tips of the fingers.

When the ground color has been smoothed down, we take either a stick of carmine (ground or lining color) or a powder rouge and apply the red to the cheeks. If we use grease paint, we make a small patch on either cheek, and then with the fingers spread it and blend it in, carrying it towards the nose rather than down the sides of the face; if we use the powder, it can be applied with the hare's foot. We observe, from our study of faces, that the color on a man's cheek is higher than that on a woman's.

Lining the eyes is more of an individual problem. If the lashes are full and dark, it is unnecessary to draw a line beneath them, but it is advisable to extend the eyes outward by drawing a line from the outside corner about a half inch in length. If the lashes are thin and light, the eyes may be lined both above and below, joining the lines and extending them a short distance beyond the outside corners of the eyes. The color of the lines will depend upon the color of the hair and the complexion of the character. Black is rarely used. Dark brown and light brown are common. The lines should not extend to the

inner corners of the eyes, but should begin about the middle of the eyes. A line completely encircling the eye will give it a round appearance which is unnatural. The eye lines should be thin and should be drawn close to the eye. For lining, the orange stick, stump, or a toothpick is used.

To add to the brilliancy of the eye, a touch of carmine is placed an eighth of an inch from the inside corner.

If the eyebrows are too heavy, it may be necessary to diminish their thickness with ground color. If they are not too heavy and are dark, they may not need to be lined but should be extended downward, but not too far, towards the temples. If they are light and thin, they should be lined and extended, the line following the natural arch of the eyebrow.

Next, we make up the lips. Occasionally the lips need little or no make-up. In case they do, the line of the lips is defined lightly with lip rouge which is applied with the tip of the finger. The lips should not be made too prominent by a heavy coat of rouge; neither should the "cupid's bow" be too large or too small. Small painted lips give a doll-like effect. If the actor's lips are large and thick, he may print his lips the desired size, and cover the remainder of the natural lips with ground tone.

One or more minor touches may be necessary

before we are ready for the powder. Cheek hollows or small eye circles may be covered with a light shade of ground tone. A weak chin may be improved by high-lighting the most prominent part. (By high-light we mean a spot upon which the light is supposed to fall. It is the opposite of shadow. In make-up, a high light is obtained by using a flesh or lining color of a lighter shade than the surrounding color,—a shade so light that it does not blend but contrasts with the color around it.) The ears may be tinted, and a pink tint may be blended in just under the eyerbrows to do away with an unnatural high-light.

The powder must now be applied to blend and soften the grease paint. We shall use a shade of powder lighter than our ground color. We must be careful not to fill our puff too full, and should powder our make-up evenly, being careful not to neglect the throat and neck. Our make-up is now complete.

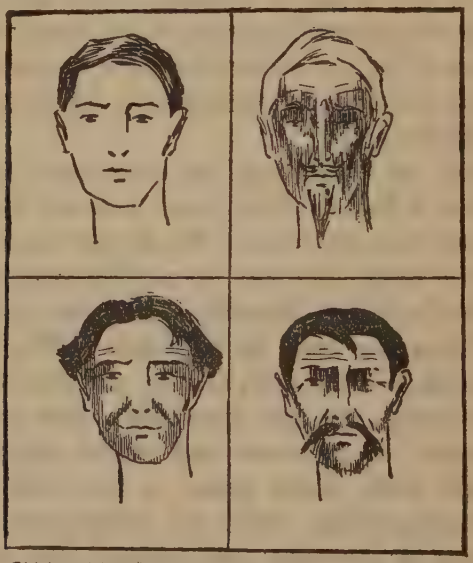
In order to remove the make-up, a thin coating of cold cream or cocoa butter is applied and rubbed in wherever there is grease paint. The paint may then be removed with a cloth or towel. It is well to have a supply of cheese cloth on hand, both for protecting the clothes when making up, and for use in removing the make-up.

(D) SUGGESTIONS FOR CHARACTER MAKE-UP

We cannot say "you put on a character make-up in this way" with the ease with which we talked about a straight make-up; for there are a multitude of character make-ups, each designed to portray different facial characteristics. They all have this point in common: they do not emphasize the natural features of the actor, but the features of the character which is being portrayed; and the character's features may be very unlike those of the actor.

There are two bases for character make-up. The first is found in the racial features which the character has inherited. We do not need to call attention to the fact that we can, by looking at his face, distinguish a Scandinavian from an Italian, or a Chinaman from an Irishman. The Scandinavian has a broad face, healthy complexion, color in his cheeks, straight blond hair, blue eyes; the Chinaman has eyebrows and eyelids which slant upwards, high cheek bones, a flat nose, and a sallow complexion, while the complexion of the Japanese is healthier and cleaner and his eyes do not have such a pronounced slant; the American Indian has small eyes, aquiline nose, thin compressed lips, high cheek bones; the Irishman's nose tends towards a "pug" and the distance from

his nose to his thin upper lip is longer than in most races; characteristics of the Hebrew are his prominent curving nose with its peculiar nostril, and his thick lips; the Frenchman's features are fine, his complexion fair; the Italian's features are full, his complexion dark. So we might continue to the point of monotony.



This and the following diagrams on make-up suggest, not the actual appearance of face and hands, but rather the position of lines and shadows in order to secure the effects desired.

The second basis for character make-up is found in the inner passion, in the spiritual, mental, and physical life of the individual which has stamped its mark upon his features. A woman who has lived a lonely, unhappy life has that life written on her face. So has the man hardened in crime, the narcotic or alcoholic addict, the woman whose spirit is nourished by an abiding religious faith, the fat, care-free optimist, the hard-headed, hard-hearted factory owner.

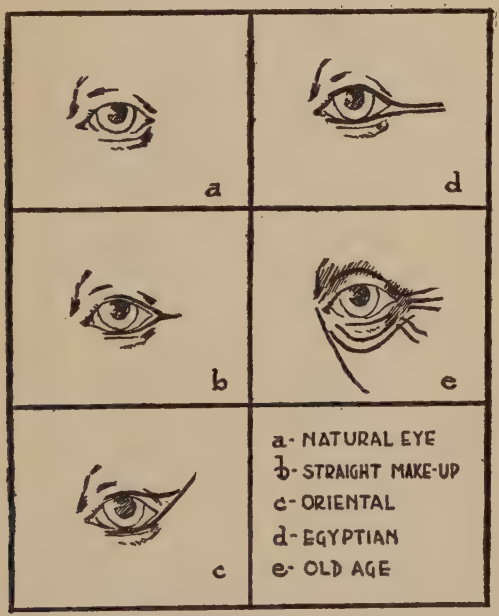
We have, then, both racial and individual characteristics; features which are inherited and features which have been moulded by certain living conditions. Now it will be impossible to take up all of the racial and individual characteristics which are important in character make-up. We shall, however, discuss the various features and the ways of changing them, and then consider one or two specific characters and work out a make-up for them.

Beginning with the forehead, we find age, worry, or dissipation making wrinkles above the eyebrows, and a small deep furrow between them. If we wrinkle our forehead, we see that the hollows of the wrinkles are dark, and that the flesh between the wrinkles is noticeably light. Therefore, when making wrinkles, we should line our foreheads with gray or brown (depending upon the light and theatre conditions) using an orange stick or a

toothpick. Black is too heavy. Thick lines give an unnatural appearance. The flesh between the hollows should then be lined with a ground color or liner lighter in tone than the ground color of the face. The furrow between the eyebrows should extend upwards diagonally from near the end of one eyebrow. Two furrows of the same length, one from each eyebrow, produce a comic rather than a realistic effect. With approaching age, hollows begin to appear at the temples. These can be reproduced by gray powder applied with the hare's foot or by a touch of gray paint, blended slightly into the ground color. Another point in the make-up of the character forehead is that the flesh sometimes becomes lighter near the hair line. This effect can be produced by using a lighter ground tone near the hair line, blending it into the heavier ground near the eyebrows. This also tends to heighten the forehead.

The make-up of the eyebrows depends upon the character. Much can be done with the eyebrows. The natural eyebrow can be painted out with ground color, and a new eyebrow painted on either above or below it. By painting out a portion of the eyebrow the direction can be changed, either downward or upward. The eyebrow can be thinned or thickened; it can be made bushy and over-hanging by daubing it with the liner and pushing the hairs outward and downward; it can

be grayed; and an effect of age can be obtained by a spot of gray or white in the center of the natural eyebrow. The actor should beware of the black lining stick, and should be moderate in the use of any lining color.



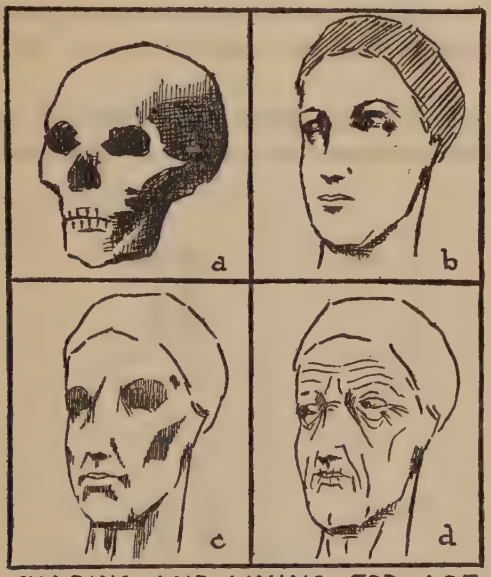
LINING THE EYES.

A chapter could be devoted to the eyes. As a preface to the few suggestions we may offer, let us advise the actor that much more can be done through facial expression and through the feelings

(either real or simulated) which animate his acting, than through the application of paint and powder. The staring eye, the narrowed eye, the eye that has lost its power of sight, even the tearful and the evil eye are the result of facial expression and feeling. But make-up may aid the eye in its expression. The eyes can be sunk into the skull by the use of gray or brown paint, which is darkest at the inside corners, is carried across the eyelids, and becomes lighter near the outside corners. As age approaches, "crow's feet" begin to spread in a fan-like shape over the temples. These are generally three or five in number, and are made with a fine lining stick. Bags appear under the eyes. These are made with the lining stick. They may be accentuated by drawing a line lighter in tone than the ground color, above the dark line. A dissipated look can be given the eye by smudging the bag lines in the middle of the bag. The eyes can be drawn together by dark shading on either side close to the bridge of the nose. An effect of tearful eyes can be produced by a soft red line above and below the eye; an effect of sadness by graying the eyelids and lining the eyes with gray. A light gray line below and above will aid in the illusion of age.

It is already apparent that character and age are suggested not alone by lines but by shadows as well. This is particularly true in the make-

up of the cheeks. The rouge on the cheeks is usually higher up on a man than on a woman. With age, the rouge retreats from the eyes, and is more "blotchy," more irregular in shape. Rouge placed close to the nose will tend to narrow

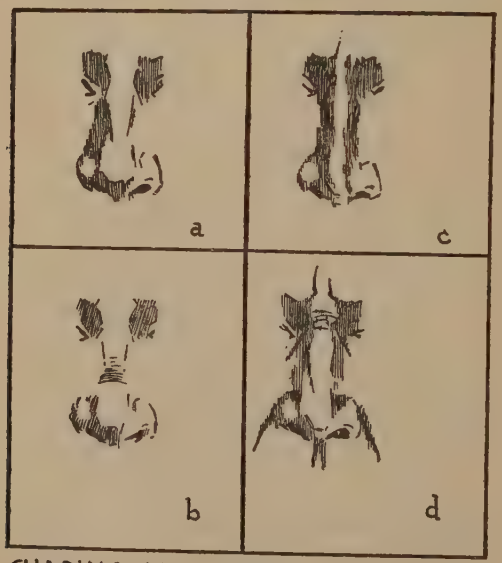


SHADING AND LINING FOR AGE
a-HUMAN SKULL b-NATURAL FACE
c-SHADOWS FOR AGE d-LINES FOR AGE

the face; placed farther out, will tend to widen it. Sunken cheeks are made with either gray powder or gray paint. The conventional sunken cheek is made by applying a triangular patch of gray to the cheek, one line of the triangle being

just below the cheek bone. The cheek bone may be raised and emphasized by placing a high-light near the outside corner of the eye, and a short dark line beneath it, which is blended into the hollow. From the actor's observation, he will discover the varieties of hollows in cheeks, and can set out to gain these same effects on his own face.

The nose is easily changed in shape and length. It may be lengthened by a white or light flesh line

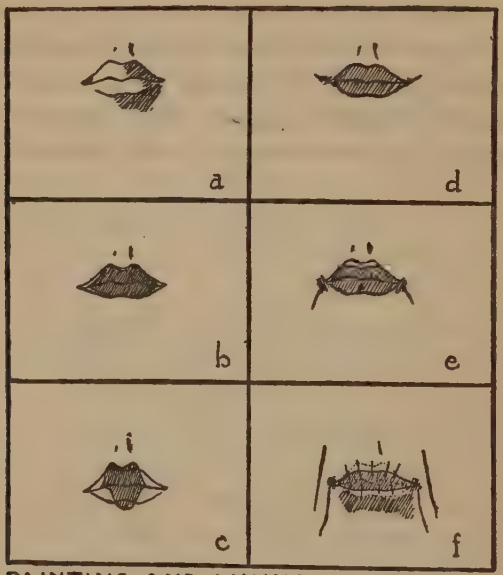


SHADING AND LINING THE NOSE
a-NATURAL NOSE b-"PUGGED" (horizontal lines and shadows)
c-ELONGATED (high light and shading) d-OLD AGE (lines and shadows)

extending along the ridge to the tip, accentuated by shadows upon either side; it may be shortened or "pugged" by drawing a shadow line horizontally across the nose, and shading the portion above it; or it may be modelled into any shape desired through the use of nose putty. To use putty, a portion is broken off and kneaded until it becomes pliable. All grease paint and cream are removed from the nose. The putty is then applied to the nose where it will adhere to the skin without danger of coming off. The nose can now be built out, widened, or lengthened, and the edges smoothed down where the putty joins the skin. When the modelling is complete, the putty is painted with ground color of a slightly different shade from that used on the face. After the performance the putty can be pulled off and worked over for another performance.

We have explained, in our discussion of straight make-up, how the shape and size of the lips are changed. Lips are very expressive. Thick lips express grossness and sensuality; straight lips, sternness and coldness; lips that turn upward, a happy disposition; those that turn downward, sorrow or cynicism; colorless lips, age or illness. Thick lips are produced by rouging beyond the natural lip lines; thin lips by covering portions of the lips with ground color; straight lips, by flattening out the cupid's bow; lips expressing hap-

piness, by a shadow line curving upwards at the corners of the mouth; those expressing sorrow, by straight shadow lines extending downwards from the corners of the mouth; illness, by painting the



PAINTING AND LINING THE MOUTH
a-NATURAL MOUTH b-STRAIGHT c-ORIENTAL d-HAPPY EXPRESSION e-SAD EXPRESSION f-OLD AGE

lips gray or flesh color; extreme age by graying the lips and drawing dark gray or brown lines vertically across the lips and an eighth of an inch beyond. The lower lip may be thickened and

made to protrude by placing a heavy shadow under the lip.

Age, dissipation, illness, or worry, soon bring wrinkles to that portion of the face extending from the nose to the mouth corners and beyond. As these hollows and wrinkles approach the vertical in direction, they give the face a pinched, narrow look; as they curve outward from the nose, they widen the face and give it a contented appearance. The shape, length, and number of these wrinkles vary greatly. Here again the actor should study faces before he attempts any variance from the conventional.

The chin can be sharpened and emphasized by a patch of light flesh tone, well blended, or it can be built out with putty in the same way as the nose is built out. A dimple can be made by drawing a thin line, a quarter of an inch in length, upon the chin.

Certain other portions of the body sometimes require make-up. The neck may be given wrinkles in the same manner as the forehead. A suggestion of a fat neck can be given by the use of horizontal gray lines with high-lights; of a skinny neck by wide gray lines drawn diagonally downward, with high-lights upon the throat tendons. Neck hollows can be made with gray paint or powder. The necklace of bones sometimes visible on a thin person can be made less notice-

able by rouging the prominences and applying a light ground color to the hollows. If the arms are bared, they should be painted either with liquid color or grease paint, usually a shade darker than the paint used on the face. Veins can be painted with a gray or blue liner, following the

MAKING UP THE HANDS

natural veins of the hands and arms. An illusion of thin hands can be given by high-lighting the finger ridges, shading the skin between them, and

carrying the shading to the back of the hands between the tendons.

These suggestions have been rudimentary and general and have by no means exhausted the character make-up. They will, however, give the beginner much to work on, and by the time he has mastered general make-up, he perhaps will have discovered many other ideas for obtaining effects which he will be anxious to try out.

Before we work out a definite character make-up, there is the subject of wigs and beards to which we should call attention.

No better advice could be given about wigs than, never use them unless they are absolutely necessary. This advice applies especially to men, whose wigs, in the main, look like wigs and never like natural hair. The next best advice is to have a wig made to order. But most amateurs cannot afford to own their wigs, and since wigs are sometimes an essential part of the make-up, actors are forced to rent them from a costumer. Fortunately good wigs are obtainable from the majority of reliable costume houses.

The natural (and in this instance the correct) way of putting on a wig is to fit it first to the forehead and then pull it back over the head. The natural way of removing a wig is not the correct way. We should never push it up from the

front, but draw it up by the hair from behind. If the wig is loose or there seems danger of its coming off during the play, it may be made to set tight to the head by first tying a band of tape or muslin around the head and then pinning the edge of the wig to the band with small hairpins. The band should be the color of the hair of the wig.

If the wig is too large, a small pleat may be taken in it back of the ears, or at the back of the wig just over the elastic; if it stands out from the face, it can be adjusted with invisible hairpins, by a small pleat near the temples, or by sticking it to the face with spirit gum. Sometimes by use of the band and careful pinning a slight looseness can be deftly disposed of.

Wigs should not be painted or powdered; for while a desirable effect may be obtained in this way, the powder and paint are very bad for the wigs.

A good wig can be combed, brushed and arranged as if it were the actor's own hair.

We have already given several suggestions about beards. The most desirable kind of beard or moustache is the one on gauze. If crêpe hair is used, it should be combed out and fluffed and pasted on the face in sections. A little goes a long way; a few inches cut from the strand is sufficient for a full beard and moustache. Both kinds of beard are stuck on with spirit gum.

Before the beards are put on, the portions of the face to be covered should be made dry and free from grease paint. Alcohol is useful in removing beards.

(E) PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF CHARACTER MAKE-UP

For our first example, let us take the character of Timson in Galsworthy's "The Pigeon." Timson is a cabby—a disreputable creature, weather-beaten, dissipated, and furrowed. This character requires a wig of scraggly, iron gray hair. Having selected as a ground color a ruddy old age, we adjust the wig to the head and begin applying the ground color and blending the line across the forepart of the wig. The color as it approaches this line should be lighter in shade, probably Natural Flesh. The wig should be high enough on the forehead so that when the forehead is wrinkled, it will not move the wig. The paint across the line should be thick. With a little patience we will find that the line can be painted out and the fore part of the wig and the forehead can be blended together.

We have only painted the upper part of the face, because it is necessary to increase the size of the nose with nose putty. The putty is cut and kneaded and a wide, thick nose is modelled over the natural nose. When the edges have been

smoothed out where they meet the skin, the rest of the face and neck are covered with thin coating of ground color.

Since Timson is an alcoholic addict, we give him a touch of rouge high up on the cheek bones, and also redden his nose a bit; but we must not rouge his nose too heavily or we will make him a farce character. We brush the eyebrows forward and downward, placing a smudge of white in the center of each. We add several deep wrinkles to the forehead. We hollow the eyes with dark gray or brown. We take expression away from the eyes by graying the eyelids and give them a watery look by drawing a soft red line above and below. We give him the usual crow's feet, running the lines downward rather than horizontal. We paint a bag under the eyes (as before described) with a smudge in the center of each.

A line is drawn downward and outward from each side of the nose. It is blended until it becomes a shadow, when another line is drawn down its center. The line and shadow are given a high-light on the cheek side. A shadow is placed between the nose and the upper lip. The lips are then painted out with ground color; they are closed tightly and a thin, dark line, curving downwards towards the corners, is drawn along the lips. Gray or brown lines are

extended outward and downward from the mouth corners, and are continued towards the jaw line as shadows, faintly high-lighted. This is to bag the cheeks. The suggestion of heavy cheeks is aided by the obliteration, with light flesh colors, of the jaw line. The lower lip is made to protrude by a heavy shadow beneath it.

Our make-up has kept Timson's face dissipated and old, but heavy and rugged. To bring out this heaviness still more, we thin and hollow the neck. The hands are reddened and the veins lined. Face, neck, and hands are then powdered, and the make-up is complete.

We select next, the Country Woman in "Will-o'-the-Wisp." The author describes the character as "an old and withered dame." We know from reading the play that she has lived a hard life, is superstitious and lonely, and belongs to no particular nationality. In our make-up we must be careful not to make her a hag, for she is, after all, a rather pleasant, sympathetic old creature.

Her hair (or her gray-streaked wig) we brush straight back and bind in a simple knot. We use as ground color sallow old age. We hollow her eyes, especially the inner corners, hollow her cheeks, giving her the conventional triangle, paint in shadows and lines from the sides of her nose almost straight down towards the corners of her

mouth, and shadow her lower lip. We may high-light faintly her cheek bones, chin, and the upper portion of her forehead. The forehead is wrinkled and the furrow drawn between the eyebrows. The eyebrows are curved outward and downward with light brown or gray. We give her a few crow's feet, slanting the lines downward. A thin, dark line is drawn under the eyes. The corners of the mouth are turned down slightly. Most of the color is removed from her lips. Instead of blotting out the jaw line, we accentuate it with a gray or brown line which does not stop abruptly at either end, but is blended into the ground color below the ears. We give her neck a hollow and lines and high-lights to suggest the tendons. We thin her hands in the manner described previously.

If she is using her natural hair, we gray it in streaks with corn starch. Then we powder her face, neck and hands with a light powder.

We have selected simple problems in character make-up. If the actress wishes more difficult problems, let her experiment with the changes in make-up involved in the characterization of Miss Kite in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," or with the make-up of Mrs. Crespigny in Fitch's "The Truth." If the actor wishes to try some characterizations which will test his ability, let him attempt Baron Chevrial, the aging roué in

"A Parisian Romance," Robert Cokeson in Galsworthy's "Justice," and He in Andreyev's "He Who Gets Slapped."

(F) "A SEARCH FOR FACES"

The authors are aware that many amateurs are familiar with the rudiments of make-up, and that those who are not have not been taught the craft of make-up nor been inspired to become make-up artists by the previous pages. There is a fertile field for improvement in the non-professional make-up room; this is a fact that few will attempt to deny; and another fact is that so far the printed word has been ineffective in bringing about the improvement.

Are we approaching the subject of make-up from the wrong angle? Are we trying to teach what cannot be successfully taught through the medium of books? Perhaps we have been slighting an important approach, and perhaps through this approach interest in make-up may be quickened, and a quickened interest may lead to improvement.

To begin with, we should ask the actor to adopt a journalistic maxim which states that every enterprising reporter should have an "eye for copy." The actor, approaching the subject of make-up, has need for the same eye. Each face he sees along the street, on the elevated, in the stores,

offers a study in make-up. Each face discloses a character. Upon each face are high-lights and shadows, lines and peculiarities of feature which reveal the character of the man: eyebrows ending abruptly or meeting on the bridge of the nose, or turned up at the outer ends; bushy eyebrows or eyebrows so light that they tone into the flesh; noses that are straight or crooked, long or pugged; faces which contain scarcely a wrinkle yet which appear as old as Methuselah; round, bland, impassive faces without a single prominent feature; faces seamed with lines yet gleaming with surprising youthfulness; faces in which the eyes are the arresting feature, or the nose, or the lips.

Every face offers its study in make-up; for the important characteristics of nearly every face can be duplicated on the stage through the ingenious use of grease paints. True, every actor does not possess a face capable of being modelled into any character he chooses; but the professional actor has proved to us that natural facial characteristics are not often an insurmountable bar to convincing make-up.

Here, then, is an interesting approach for the non-professional actor. And what a game for the eager actor to engage in! Having learned the rudiments of make-up, let him set out in search of faces; and having found one which interests him, let him study it, and return to his make-up box

and mirror and try to copy it. His first efforts will, perhaps, be unsatisfactory; but perseverance will, as usual, bring its reward.

Any actor possessing common intelligence and patience and with the instinct of the average man for handling color and a pencil, may learn to put on an adequate make-up; if, in addition, he possesses the eye for copy and goes out after his copy, he may some day lay claim to the title of make-up artist.

5. A Goal for the Amateur Actor

The greatest curse to the amateur actor has been his friends. If we read any small town newspaper account of a local play, or a city or college paper account, for that matter, the general impression we gather is that nothing remains to be desired in histrionic art after witnessing the production in the Grand Theatre on the previous Friday night. The absurd idea still prevails here and there that a company of players can be organized anywhere, and within a few weeks can be trained to give a well-nigh perfect performance of the world's best (or worst) play. And despite the plays we are forced to see, many people still cling to the idea. There probably has never been a performance so hopelessly without merit, one wherein the actors missed entirely the interpretation of the characters as created by the author, at

which a respectable minority of the friendly, uncritical audience did not proclaim, with something which appeared to be enthusiasm, that the actors "did just perfect and as well as professionals."

This attitude of leniency has been very bad for the amateur. Lack of criticism has made the appraisal of his own talents impossible. Generally it has given him a highly exaggerated opinion of his own abilities. Let him not be deceived. He is in all probability not so gifted as his friends have declared. No amateur, no matter how clever or brilliant he is, can go on the stage and give a performance which is as meritorious as the performance of an intelligent second or third rate professional.

In some way the amateur has to remove the curse of his friends. To do this let him read the stories of the great actors and discover the long years of apprenticeship to which they had to submit while they developed their powers and mastered their technique. If a professional has to spend a dozen or more years in hard labor before he is accounted competent, is it reasonable to suppose that an amateur needs to spend only four or five weeks on a rôle as difficult as Shylock to be able at the end of that time to give a perfect performance? And let him study the best acting of the contemporary professional stage; let him try to strip himself of his egotism and open his eyes to the professional's actor-

sense, his technique, his surety and ease. Of course, he will never be able to compare the professional's work with his own. It is very unfortunate that he, unlike the inventor, poet, musician, or builder, can never see his creation, for his creation cannot exist apart from himself. Yet surely he can acquire enough honesty and intelligence and critical sense to see in great acting power, subtlety, shadings, reserve, voice, and bodily control which he does not possess. Or, if these methods do not succeed, he might take an opportunity to test himself before an audience which does not know him, among whom he has no sympathetic friends. Perhaps this experience will give him a realization of his limitations. Or, let him set to work under some severe and honest director in whom he has confidence. But through one of these methods or through some method of his own devising, let him endeavor to get a more just estimate of his powers than his family and friends have given him.

The amateur, having found how much he needs to know and having become humble before the art of acting, now finds himself in a situation as undesirable and helpless as that of a poor, abandoned orphan. He sees all about him interest in drama, he finds groups here and there eager to devise finer lighting effects, more beautiful and elusive scenery, he perceives an enthusiasm for fresh and interesting methods of presentation, but he discovers very

few who have any interest in his lot; he finds people willing and anxious to spend thought and imagination and money on stagecraft, but he discovers very few who are eager to spend thought, imagination, or money on an effort to make his acting more beautiful, elusive, or interesting. He is recognized as a necessity and he is permitted to assist in the creation of the play, but he must carry on any experiments and work for any development in himself, almost alone. True, he may read that his art is the foundation stone of the dramatic structure and he may hear warm praise for the great actors, but no one seems able or willing to help him to an understanding of his art. At most he will be drilled in the mechanics of acting, and when this is done, he is left to shift for himself.

Today the amateur is ambitious and intelligent whereas twenty years ago he was only a player at acting, a mimic possessed of intuition and vanity. What can he do for himself? What should he strive to do? It is time for him to discover a path of development along which he can go, and to set for himself a goal which he can endeavor to reach.

First of all, he should see that his goal is not one which can be reached next week, but one which will carry him far into the future. There is an impulse to woo the applause of the moment, to rush into a big part, to use the few tricks and me-

chanics of the actor's craft, and make a "hit." This impulse will never lead him to a worthy goal. His goal should be one which can only be reached through study and preparation, through cumulative effort extending over months and years.

Granted that he has set his goal a goodly distance ahead of his present abilities, what are the milestones he must pass before he reaches it? The very poorest actor, and one who, in truth, is no actor at all, is the person who learns his lines, and having stumbled onto the stage, opens his mouth and delivers them. He doesn't impersonate character, he doesn't interpret ideas. He does about what a parrot could do, if the trainer has had patience enough to work with it. Every amateur can see this milestone and can pass it without much effort. The next one he approaches is the external impersonation of character. Suppose the actor is called upon to play an old cabman. He will acquire the old man's walk, his manner of speech, his way of rolling his eyes and holding his hands; and he will dress himself in clothes appropriate to the character. So, when he appears on the stage, we will be led to believe that we *see* the cabman, and when he speaks we may believe that we *hear* him. Most amateurs are able to reach this mile post, but many do not get even this far, because, instead of imitating a cabman they try to imitate some other actor's imitation of him. On the stage,

at any period, we find certain conventional external characterizations: a young man of fashion is represented as buttoning only the lower button of his coat, carrying a cane, smoking cigarettes, wearing a boutonnière, and talking in a blasé, affected manner; so also a mother, a society girl, a young army officer, a tramp, dress in this conventional way or that and behave so-and-so. For even an external characterization the actor must go to life, not the stage, if he wishes his work to be fresh and entertaining.

So far the milestones have marked advances in the craft of acting, but with the next, he enters the domains of art. Most amateurs advance within a reasonable distance of this next milestone, but many never reach it; for now the actor is asked to give, not only the externals, but the spirit, the soul of the character; to give the complete illusion of character. To do this he must have a trained voice and a trained body, he must possess acting sense and technique, he must be able to think and feel, so that when he comes upon the stage as the old man we say that the character "lives," or that the actor "is the old man." His teacher or coach may walk beside him up to this milestone, but in order to pass it, he must go alone.

When he gives us this illusion we are generally entirely satisfied; more than this, when an actor gives us clean-cut, convincing reality we are will-

ing to applaud him generously, and we admire him and respect him. And may it be said to the credit of the non-professionals, that occasionally one of their number merits such applause and respect.

Now let us halt and ask ourselves what it is we are trying to do with our scenery and with all our stage embellishments? Is it not to simplify and suggest, to present a mood rather than a reality? And if this is true, is there not another milestone ahead of the actor, a milestone which will put him abreast of his scenery? He has not gone beyond convincing characterization; but is not his art capable of giving us more than the illusion of reality? Is not his art as flexible as the painter's art? What, then, is his next milestone? As the painter in the theatre has discarded the representation of a tree on canvas, and using folds of cloth and clever manipulation of lighting, suggests to us the idea of a tree, so the actor, by discarding much of his photographic copying of the details of characterization, and by using intelligence, technique, and soul, may suggest to us, not a cabman but the idea of a cabman. After all, when he presents to us only the reality of the character he is giving us nothing more than an emphasis upon what we can behold in actual life; his art is little more than photographic. But in giving us the idea he will give us the very essentials, the truth of the old man; and instead of being the photog-

rapher, he will have become the creative artist.

When he has reached this milestone, the actor may rest, content with his accomplishment. Perhaps he will have come to the end of his path and have reached his goal; perhaps he will see other milestones on ahead. But his ambitions should extend thus far, even if he never realizes them. It is neither a ridiculous nor an impossible ambition. He has never been ambitious enough. Having conquered the world of the flesh, may he not turn his eyes towards the invisible world of the spirit? Having mastered the obvious in acting, may he not attempt the subtle?

Perhaps he would have gone on beyond the illusion of reality before this if the art of acting were not so underestimated and unappreciated. Yet, that it is underestimated and unappreciated is accounted for in the fact that the impersonation instinct, which is universal, gives all of us the assurance that we are competent judges of impersonation; and since impersonation is one of the functions of the actor, we have considered it his whole function and have permitted his art no freedom for further development. If he does more or less than impersonate, we feel free to criticize him, because what he does is not dictated by our own instinct. But we allow the painter to be more than a photographer. He may paint a face in all manner of ways and we still permit him to go on

painting, so long as he conveys to us the idea of a face. Perhaps the actor will have difficulty with his audience when he discards illusion for suggestion. Just how willingly an audience will adopt any new theatre convention is not easy to determine. But the creation and portrayal of *more* than the illusion of reality offers an interesting theatrical adventure.

Let it not be understood that all plays are to be approached with a determination to suggest a group of ideas. A photographic play may be best presented photographically with photographic scenery and photographic acting. Realism calls for realism. But could not Romeo be played so that we see, not an impersonation of a youth in love, but the idea of love itself manifested in the youth? Would not Candida be more interesting if we were given, not the illusion of an English clergyman's wife, but the truth which is back of her character? Indeed, are not the ideas concerning some truth in human life of greatest interest in all of Shaw's plays?

In conclusion: it is a long journey from the amateurish home talent play to the suggestive acting of which we have been speaking. But the non-professional actor needs to set out upon a journey, for he is moving about in a circle while the other stage artists are advancing. He needs a greater respect for his art, he needs a vision of its possi-

bilities, and he needs the enthusiasm and eagerness for experimentation which will start his work moving forward, as the other stage arts have moved forward.

CHAPTER VII

A FOUNDATION FOR PRODUCTION IN THE STUDY OF THE PLAY

THE preceding chapters have been devoted to production from the standpoints of director, art director, and actor. We may have seemed to assume that the director's connection with production begins with his selection of the play, the art director's connection begins with his specific problem of embellishing that play, and the actor's with the creation of a character in that play. Such an assumption presupposes a knowledge on the part of these theatre workers which is sometimes lacking; it presupposes, for instance, that the director is prepared, from his reading of the play, to pass judgment upon its worth as a piece of dramatic writing, its acting possibilities, its problems of staging, its probable effect upon the audience.

A director should know the characteristics of a play which set it apart as a unique form of literature. He should know the types of plays and the characteristics of each type. He should be able to distinguish between comedy and farce, for example, and see why the author has chosen one medium

for his writing instead of the other, and which type is more difficult of interpretation or more suitable for amateur acting. When he picks up a play he should be able to discover whether suspense is aroused soon enough, whether it is adequate, whether it is sustained without break to the climax, whether it is held too long. The director must be critic as well as producer, analyst as well as creator. The work of production should begin in the growing mind and lively imagination of a man in front of the footlights and not behind them; or if this is not always possible, it should begin in the library and not in the rehearsal room. If production actually began here, we would not find directors working on a play of character as though it were a play of situation, or on a comedy in the spirit he should employ on a tragedy.

Because plays vary widely as to type and purpose, and because the types require different viewpoints, different attacks, and aim at different ends, a subdivision into types and an understanding of the types are essential to their intelligent production. Fortunately for drama, but unfortunately for the academic mind which seeks to "pigeon hole," plays do not fall into hard and fast divisions. A division represents an ideal which is almost never reached, it does not represent actuality; but because the viewpoint and emphasis of the author make now one element or quality of the

play dominant, and now another, it is possible to analyze plays with benefit to our general question of production.

1. Plays of Situation, Character, and Atmosphere

A play is concerned with things happening, it is concerned with people, and it may be concerned with the mood surrounding the events or people. The author, viewing his material with an outstanding interest in one of these elements, and emphasizing this element above the others, writes either a play of situation, of character, or of atmosphere. With this simple division we will begin our analysis.

The play of situation is self-explanatory: it is a play in which that which happens is of first importance. In such a play we are interested only mildly in the people or the mood, and very much in what is going on. The one-act play, "Rosalie," by Max Maurey, is such a play. A man and wife are awaiting the arrival of a distinguished visitor. They intend to impress him with an opulence and aristocracy which they do not possess and are in a high state of nervousness. In the midst of their preparations they get into an altercation with Rosalie, the maid, whose assistance they must have if they are to deceive their visitor; and while the

argument with the maid is in full swing, the door bell rings. They jump to the conclusion that this must be the visitor. But the maid, feeling that she has been insulted, refuses to answer the bell, whereupon arguments and promises follow in excited order. Finally, when husband and wife are on the point of despair, and after the maid has accepted an elaborate apology with a raise in wages and other considerations, Rosalie goes to the door, only to return with the announcement that the caller was some one enquiring for a family residing on another floor.

If we ask ourselves a few simple questions about this play, the play of situation becomes clear to us. Are we interested in the people? Do we sympathize with them or hate them? Do they stand out as individuals, different from all other human beings? To these questions we answer at once, "No." When Rosalie comes on, do we not recognize her type immediately? She is not individualized. In what, then, is our interest? It is in asking ourselves such questions as: Will the the husband and wife be ready for M. Poulot? Will Rosalie be persuaded to go to the door? Will she get there on time? The action could take place almost anywhere. The setting is unimportant. If we pick out a line of dialogue, we cannot tell who said it. What holds our attention and keeps us in suspense is the situation.

Such a type of play, simple as it is, has certain advantages which may appeal to the amateur playwright, director, and actor. The playwright finds it the simplest of all plays to write, for little except situation is required. Dialogue is not important, characterization is not demanded, atmosphere is not necessary. The director at the beginning of his career would do well to consider the play of situation. The public still likes a story and still appreciates a dramatic situation more than it does a finely-drawn characterization. As far as his audience is concerned, the director is running but little risk with this type of play. He should likewise consider it if he is uncertain about the capabilities of his actors. The characters are usually little more than names; at most they are of secondary importance. Even very bad actors or badly directed actors cannot, ordinarily, destroy the effect of a play of situation, while they can easily ruin a play of character or atmosphere. As for the actor, while he will find it the easiest type of play in which to act, he will also find it the least satisfactory, for it offers but small opportunity for the creation of character.

The play of situation is not a high form of drama. We usually associate it with cheapness and inferiority. Yet, this does not always hold, for the biggest scene in Pinero's "The Gay Lord Quex" is a scene of situation. But in most cases

it tends to become thin and unlifelike, inartistic and cheap, providing a thrill for a thrill's sake. The beginning non-professional should know it when he sees it, recognize its advantages and shortcomings, and use it when he questions his own ability or the ability of his actors; but he should also remember when producing it that he is employing one of the lower forms of dramatic art.

The play of situation is exactly what the name implies. So also is the play of character. But we soon find this second type more difficult of study and comprehension. Situation and plot,—the words seem to have a close relationship in our minds; when we casually remember a play the chances are that situation and plot will be remembered first. Action—here is suggested another idea which is always associated with drama; and this idea, too, is connected with plot. But when we think of characterization we think of moods, tempers, personal appearance, disposition, mental and moral vices and virtues. Such attributes do not appear to have much dramatic power; they do not seem to build up or blend into the idea of drama.

The first thing for us to remember when we speak of a play of character is that in such a play we are not eliminating all dramatic elements save characterization. In a play of situation we may

eliminate good dialogue, atmosphere and characterization; but in a play of character we must also have plot which contains action and situation. The play of situation satisfies the requirements of drama when there is action and a clash of wills; and the play of character must satisfy the same requirements, otherwise we are likely to have an essay in dialogue form. The difference, then, between the function of action and plot in a play of situation and in a play of character is a difference in emphasis. In one, the action is an end in itself; in the other, it is only a means whereby character is portrayed and made dramatic.

The third act of "The Gay Lord Quex" offers an example of a scene built around a situation. The third act of Jones' "Dolly Reforming Herself," equally interesting drama, is built around character. The one-act play gives numerous plays of character. Gustav Weid's "Autumn Fires" and Lady Gregory's "The Workhouse Ward" are clear examples. In both plays there are clash, suspense, drama. In "The Workhouse Ward" we are led to an interest in, and a sympathy for, the two old men. We like them. We want to know, not what will happen, but what will happen to *them*. So, in a play of character our emotions are aroused, not for events but for people; and we leave the theatre feeling, not that we

have seen something happen, but that we have touched the lives of one or more interesting human beings.

It is easily guessed that the play of character is the more difficult for the playwright. And the director's task is also harder. When dealing with this play his first problem is to learn all there is to know about the characters; then he must choose his cast carefully, selecting only actors with intelligence and sensibilities; and finally he must keep at his actors day after day until they get under the skins and into the lives of the characters they are creating. The task of the director suggests the heavier requirement made on the actor by such a play. It demands native instinct for acting or acquired ability, and usually both, coupled with a sensitiveness for character and great patience. Because the appeal of this play is usually subtler, finer, and frequently more mental than the play of situation, more is demanded of the audience. So, from the standpoint of everyone concerned with the play, the production of this type is a higher and harder task than the production of the situation play.

A third type of play, which results from the special viewpoint of the author and his selection of certain elements for the emphasis of this viewpoint, is the play of atmosphere. While the long play of atmosphere is found only rarely, the one-

act play occasionally employs atmosphere as its dominating element. Atmosphere is the emotional flavor of the time and place in which the events of the play unfold. Setting is not atmosphere; environment is not atmosphere; elaborate or simplified scenery is not atmosphere. Atmosphere is subtle and mysterious. It is the mood of the author, transferred almost mystically, we might say, to the audience.

In this third type of play we are interested, not in things happening nor in people, but in a mood, an abstraction, a symbol. We leave the theatre with a feeling that we have beheld Fear or touched Death; or perhaps we have been given a mood which cannot be analyzed or expressed. We leave the theatre after seeing Maeterlinck's abstract little play "The Intruder" with a realization that we know death and its mood.

It goes without saying that such a play requires very fine writing. It challenges a director to his best efforts. A partisan to farce or realism has no business attempting it; a director with no sympathy for it, and without imagination and a love for the poetic and elusive, should leave it alone. But if the play of atmosphere intrigues the imagination of a director, and if he has the patience and the material required for its production, he will find a rich reward awaiting his effort. As for the actor, if he is a beginner, the chances are very

much against his having the ability to act it successfully. To subordinate oneself to a mood, to become a part of a feeling, is not easy. Yet, despite its difficulties, the non-professional has often succeeded in presenting it convincingly; and when it is so presented the effect is powerful and vivid. The audience may not know what is happening to it, but something does happen; and if the audience is one of intelligence and sensibilities, it receives an experience for which it must be sincerely indebted to the creators.

Understand, these different types may be used in combination, and frequently are to good advantage. It is possible to emphasize character so that it is important, and in the same play to emphasize situation so that it is important. Shakespere does this in "Hamlet." And such a combination is natural. In life we are now interested in situation and again interested in the people involved in the situation. But the dramatist must be wary when he is using the combination. Shakespere, himself, slipped in "Titus Andronicus" when he gathered together a series of horrible, blood-curdling situations and put into them loving, sympathetic people. The director, also, must be on his guard. A play containing these types in combination requires study and exact emphasis in production, otherwise the audience will lose what the dramatist intended it should get.

2. Comedy and Farce; Tragedy and Melodrama

The producer may find one other division of plays of value in his work; the division into comedy and tragedy.

Wherein lies the essential difference between a serious play and a comic play? Is it in a difference of material? Is some material suitable for tragedy and some for comedy? In regard to some specific themes and situations: yes; but in general, almost any theme,—love, hate, death, marriage, burglary, old age,—may be treated either seriously or lightly. Again the types are differentiated by the viewpoint of the author,—a viewpoint which he imparts, through director and actors, to the audience. If the author sees in a piece of material dramatic tragic values, and holding the tragic viewpoint so emphasizes his material that we, too, see his tragic values, he has written (for us as producers) a tragic play; if he sees and employs the comic values we have a comedy. These values must be determined by careful study; *the label on the cover of a play is not to be trusted.*

Both tragedy and comedy differ widely in kind and degree; both may be subdivided again and again. We shall speak of only four forms: true comedy, and its close relative, farce; and true tragedy and its bad offspring, melodrama.

Comedy and farce are readily distinguished, one from the other. Comedy is concerned with real people. What the people do will meet the test of reality. In comedy, both the situation and characters are honest, and the play moves forward (interrupted by numerous laughs, it is true), to a logical and honest conclusion. Jones' "Mary Goes First" is a fine example of true comedy. In farce, on the other hand, the people are sometimes probable and sometimes improbable and what they do is exaggerated. We may have probable people doing improbable things, or improbable people doing probable things; but somewhere in the play there is improbability and exaggeration. Farce is comedy carried beyond reality. That which carries it is exaggeration, the exaggeration of comic values. When a character eats a dozen cucumber sandwiches at one sitting, when a sensible business man, because of a wager, suddenly becomes the servant of his business partner, and upon meeting his fiancée, still behaves exactly like a servant, we are in farce, not comedy.

The director must know whether he is producing comedy or farce. If he is producing comedy his stage business will be governed by the test of reality; but if he is producing farce, he may put his tongue in his cheek and invent extravagant business, though never going beyond the spirit of the

play. If he is producing "Helena's Husband," for example, he may have, at the rise of the curtain, Helena reclining on her couch and Tsumu, her servant, *with her back to the audience*, kneeling at her feet. When Helena speaks the line; "There is no doubt about it, Tsumu, I envy you your complexion," Tsumu, turning towards her, discloses to the audience the fact that her face is black, and the audience gets its first laugh; a legitimate laugh in this case, but one which could not be tolerated in true comedy.

Another point in the production of these two plays is the point of tempo. Both forms are usually paced more rapidly than a serious play; but whereas in comedy the pace may be slow enough to allow the audience to think as the play proceeds, in farce the pace must be more rapid, for if the audience is allowed time to think it may begin to reason about the absurdities and unrealities of the farce and become critical; and in farce when an audience becomes critical the play is lost.

The actor, too, must adopt one attitude towards comedy, another towards farce. Both demand a sense of humor, or the understanding of what a sense of humor is in others; both require brisk, clean-cut acting, with head up; but comedy calls for restraint in acting, farce for freedom and exaggeration in reading, gesture and action. The trained actor may be able to handle farce readily,

but the beginner finds it a difficult order to fill, and frequently makes himself ridiculous rather than funny.

Pure farce or pure comedy is hard to find. Most comedy contains some farcical situation or characterization or dialogue. In "Her Husband's Wife" we have characters speaking lines one minute which normal, sane people would speak, and in the next saying things which those characters would not say in real life. But if we are constantly alert, and if we apply the test of reality to situations, character, or dialogue, we can determine whether we are in comedy or farce.

It is easier to distinguish between comedy and farce than between tragedy and melodrama. However, the two serious forms are not difficult to differentiate in the abstract. In tragedy we have a series of events in logical sequence, which have a causal relationship, are emphasized for their serious values, and which end in catastrophe. In tragedy there must be a reason. If a man commits a murder we must be satisfied that such a man would have committed that particular murder. In tragedy we are able to analyze the play and see how, through weakness or strength of character, through fate or force of circumstances, the catastrophe is not only possible but inevitable. In melodrama, too, we have a series of events, we have an emphasis on the serious, we have a catastrophe;

but there is not necessarily a logical relationship throughout; there isn't honest motivation. The creator of melodrama is interested in giving his audience a thrill; and having his eye on effect, he is willing to sacrifice logic of character or situation in order to obtain his effect. Tragedy is an honest effort to present an illusion of reality; melodrama is pretense.

The difference between the two forms may be made clearer through a comparison and contrast of two modern one-act plays: Percival Wilde's "Dawn" and Eugene O'Neill's "Ile." In "Dawn" we have no sympathy for the doctor friend nor for the abused wife; neither have we any hatred for the villainous husband. But in "Ile" our sympathy goes out to the poor wife of the ship's captain, and we have an anger which is touched with pity for the hard hearted captain, himself. The author of "Dawn," in order to bring about the climax of his play, must have the doctor a very brave man, the husband a very brave man and the wife a very brave woman. It is improbable that each would have met such a demand for bravery in real life; but as bravery is necessary for the approaching climax, they arbitrarily, become brave. In "Ile," on the other hand, we do not find any shifting of character for the sake of the climax; the climax grows out of character, is the result of character. In "Dawn" we know it is all pretense,

and after experiencing the thrill contained in the supernatural ending, we can dismiss the play from our minds; but the vision of the hard, proud captain in "Ile" and of his insane wife, stay with us long after we have left the theatre. Wilde, perhaps, had an "idea" for a play; O'Neill, either from experience or in his imagination, created two very live human beings and saw how one of them would lead the other to destruction. Wilde builds his play on theatrical devices: the coming of dawn, the knock at the door, screams, drawing of revolvers, a battle of nitro-glycerine, an explosion, and an absurd but thrilling supernatural curtain line. Such devices are not necessary in "Ile." "Dawn" is interesting and thrilling; "Ile," as with all true tragedy, is more real, more gripping, and goes deeper into our emotional life.

It may appear from the preceding paragraphs, that the director or actor should be able to distinguish easily between the two forms. But such is not always the case. And one reason for this is that in our serious plays the director and actor are frequently dealing with big, unusual emotions: a man under the stress of a great fear; a mother facing the death of her only child; a father overwhelmed with disappointment over the crime of his son. These moments, with their accompanying emotions, are not the common experience of all of us. So we have to call upon our imaginations to

supply what we lack in experience. And very often our imaginations are not the best counsellors. They allow us to be carried away by emotion and we permit the characters to do things that do not ring true; which are too sentimental, too brutal, or too extreme. The stuff of comedy is much more common property. The test of reality may be made here with much more certainty than in serious work.

The director will sometimes find the production of serious plays difficult for the above reason. He may not always be sure whether he is in tragedy or melodrama. In this case, the trained actor is the best judge. If the actor has *become his character*, if he understands him thoroughly, he will be sensitive to the inconsistency when he is asked to say something or do something which the character is temperamentally or emotionally incapable of saying or doing.

The question of acting in comedy and tragedy has been discussed in the chapter on the actor. Here, we will only add that the average amateur can play comedy well enough to please a lenient audience more easily than he can play tragedy; but he will be able to display his best and most convincing work in serious plays.

One more point needs emphasis, the point of the serious play and the audience. The idea that the amateur must present a "funny" play is pass-

ing. Most people enjoy a "sad" play as well as a "comic" one. And in the serious play, the audience, once given the cue, will shift its viewpoint either to theatrical effect or reality. Tragedy and melodrama both have a place in our affections. But an audience is not so willing to give true emotional response to sham people and sham tragedy. This fact should govern the producer in selecting his play and in his handling of the particular play. Melodrama can and should be played broadly. The director should give the audience the right cue. It is bad policy to deceive, or to attempt to deceive, an audience.

It is superfluous to do more than call attention to the fact that these forms, like comedy and farce, overlap; and to the equally obvious fact that tragedy and comedy are usually plays of character; melodrama and farce, plays of situation.

3. The Technical Elements

As the auto mechanic knows the parts of a car and the function of each part, so the theatre worker should know the technical elements which are employed in the building of a play, and their value and effectiveness on the stage. Throughout centuries of experimentation certain effective methods of writing have been discovered and per-

fected; and while these methods are not governed by fixed rules, their effectiveness has made them a part of our accepted dramatic tradition.

(A) EXPOSITION

Except as a matter of general knowledge and only occasional usefulness, the question of exposition is of but small interest to the actor or director, although it is of vital interest to the writer. As life is an unending progression, the events of yesterday determining to a greater or lesser extent the events of today, and as a playwright selects only a moment in this progression for the action of his play, it is usually necessary for him to tell us something of the events and the characters in the events which have made this particular dramatic moment possible. The narration of the preceding actions which we must know before we can have a complete understanding of the actions of the play, is exposition.

Various expository methods of other days have now fallen into disuse; such methods as the chorus, prologue, and dumb show or pantomine. Various other methods of more modern invention, have, through abuse, lost their respectability. Among these the confidante and telephone methods may be mentioned. The demands made of the writer to cover up his exposition, to make it

appear reasonable and natural, have led to a finer and subtler technique. Either because the characters are what they are, or because of the situation in which they are placed, or because the action demands it, the stage characters speak naturally and honestly of past events in such a way that not only is dramatic action unimpeded, but the necessary information is given to the audience.

No fixed rules govern the handling of exposition. It may be given at the beginning of a play or after suspense is created; it may be long or short; it may be given all at once or it may be spread over the entire play. Each play offers an individual expository problem. But in all cases the exposition should be clear, and interestingly told, and should not halt the movement of the play.

It goes without saying that a director should not choose a play in which a character speaks the exposition over a telephone, or in which a woman imparts information to her maid which no woman would confide to a maid or which the maid already knows. The production of plays technically well constructed has had its effect upon the audience; the audience is becoming conscious of any bad handling of the technical elements. If the director is in doubt concerning the question of exposition, let him read the natural, but un-

dramatic, exposition of Wolff's "Where But in America," and contrast it with the natural and dramatic exposition of Dickinson's "In Hospital;" let him examine Arthur Hopkins' "Moonshine" which opens with action and suspense followed by natural exposition; or let him read the first several pages of Hankin's "The Cassilis Engagement" in order to see how character, suspense, action, and exposition are interwoven.

(B) SUSPENSE

In his "Dramatic Technique" Professor Baker explains suspense as follows: "Suspense means a straining forward of interest, a compelling desire to know what will happen next. Whether a hearer is totally at a loss to know what will happen, but eager to ascertain; partly guesses at what will take place but desires to make sure; or almost holds back, so greatly is he in dread of an anticipated situation,—he is in a state of suspense, for be it willingly or unwillingly on his part, on sweeps his interest."

Suspense gives rise to one of two questions: What will happen?or, how will it happen? Sometimes we are at a loss to know what will take place. Will the lover really elope with the girl? Will the man confess his crime to save the life of another? Sometimes we are confident of what is

going to happen,—we know the lover and girl will elope,—but our suspense is in *how* they will do it, *how* they will surmount their difficulties. But in either kind of suspense the audience is interested, is straining forward, is anticipating the dramatic moments which seem sure to follow.

As directors we must look for the suspense in our play. An intelligent understanding of suspense will lead us into fewer mistakes in the choice of plays. We will be able to ask and answer intelligently such questions as: Does the author tell us so much that the interest is lost? Does the author destroy his suspense by the interpolation of extraneous material? Is the suspense held too long? If we understand suspense, we can tell at a glance what is wrong with Brock's little play, "The Bank Account."

Suspense may be gripping or it may be subtle and light, but it must be there, unmistakably. Suspense is the treacherous path, along which the audience is led from the moment its interest is created to the climax of the play.

(c) ACTION

The element of action needs only a word of explanation. In almost any definition of drama we learn that "a clash of wills is expressed in

terms of objective action." A play without action, without process of change, without the unfolding of events, is not in reality a play. The art of drama asks for something more than discussion or character portrayal. Emotional response is desired and this is obtained through clash and action. Things must happen. People must *do* not *be*. And this must be borne in mind by the beginning producer. There are plays which, owing to the cleverness or genius of the writer, contain the power of fascination and dramatic appeal, yet are without the important element of action. It takes brilliant direction and clever acting to present such plays successfully to an audience. If there is doubt about either audience or actors, it is better to depend upon story and action than upon dialogue, atmosphere or characterization.

(D) CLIMAX

Until the beginning of the Elizabethan period, English drama displayed very little feeling for climax; but at present climax is as much a part of dramatic tradition as is characterization or suspense. Most one-act plays are written for and around a climax; and even in longer plays the climax is now and then the point from which the playwright begins to construct his play.

It is well to hold in mind some distinction between crisis and climax. If we assume the crisis to indicate the turn in the plot, the moment when the clash becomes acute, when the decision can no longer be averted, then the climax will be the highest point of interest in the crisis, the moment of defeat or victory, the break, the crash. If our question of suspense is either "What will happen?" or "How will it happen?" the climax yields us the answer to our question, and in so doing, breaks the suspense.

In a day when hundreds of actable plays, both long and short, are being written, and when technique is no longer the secret of the few, nearly every writer has grasped the significance of the climax. Our climaxes are vigorous, tense, and dramatically powerful. But they are not always inevitable, and therefore are not always satisfactory. The climax frequently makes or mars a one-act play. Suppose Dunsany had failed on the climax in "A Night at an Inn." The play would, perhaps, never have been given a production. Beach, who throughout the action of "The Clod" was always close to melodrama and frequently in it, has saved for some of us a highly melodramatic climax because he has accustomed us to melodrama earlier in the play; while for others of us he has written a climax which is too strong for our satisfactory acceptance.

(E) DIALOGUE

When we come to dialogue we come to an element which is of great importance to the actor. Well constructed dialogue may give the actor opportunity for convincing characterization, for impressive reading, and for rising to dramatic heights impossible otherwise; badly written dialogue may deprive him of these opportunities and force him to impersonation below his powers.

Dialogue is very important to the play. In the final analysis action is of first importance, for we can have a play without characterization and without dialogue, but we can never have a play without action. Nevertheless, in our modern drama dialogue is of very great importance. Since Oscar Wilde, in the nineties, began to delight audiences with the brilliant dialogue of his farce comedies, this element has remained one of the chief interests of both writers and audiences.

What are the functions of dialogue? It should give us the necessary exposition, it should give us characterization, and it should move the action forward. To these functions may be added the dubious function of giving us a laugh through a clever line even though the line have no legitimate reason for remaining in the play other than the reason that it is funny. What are the qualities

of good dialogue? Conciseness, directness, and successful delineation of character.

If we are thinking of producing a play we should examine its dialogue. If we question its reality or its dramatic value we might ask ourselves a few simple questions about it. Does it fulfil one of its legitimate functions? Does it moralize? Is it too commonplace, wandering, or uncertain? Is it unlifelike? Is it merely the author speaking? Is it phrased rhetorically or for actual speech? Especially should the actor study his dialogue to ascertain whether it will help him and not hinder him in his characterization and reading.

(F) STAGE DIRECTIONS

The old dramatists wrote in no stage directions save the most necessary, such as those for the entrance and exit of their characters; some of the moderns, Shaw and Barker in particular, write stage directions which include description, narration, essay, and complete biography. The question as to what amount of stage direction an author may write, is an interesting subject of debate among a certain type of critics. From our standpoint, we do not find elaborate stage directions a criminal offense. Frequently they are of assistance to both director and actor. They may

help us in our interpretation of character, and open up new ideas, new ways of approach to the play. But whether they are brief or expansive, the director should study them as conscientiously as he studies the dialogue.

But we often hear the director say, "I cannot carry out the author's stage directions." Is he justified in such a statement? No single answer can be given in reply. We will take it for granted that the director has studied the play so thoroughly that he has formed an opinion of the author's exactness, imagination and stage sense. If the author has made a wholly favorable impression, then the director should rely upon him with the consciousness that only by following his stage directions will he bring to the audience the play which was created in the imagination of the author. On the other hand, if he has studied the play, and if because of some situation, idea, or character, decides to produce it, but discovers also, that the author has been more engrossed in his dialogue than in his directions, which are not worked out with exactness, then surely he is at liberty to discard the printed stage directions and invent business of his own. But his best policy is to give the writer the benefit of the doubt. For example, if a director is going to produce a play by Galsworthy he will do well to observe thoughtfully the stage directions, for through them he

will gain a clearer knowledge of the play, and by following them he will find his task of direction growing easier and more pleasant.

What has been said concerning the director applies in some degree to the actor. When an actor has been given his part, let him not consider his lines his only work. His stage directions are of equal importance. Lines and business should be learned together and rehearsed together, for both are integral parts of the greater whole.

Of course the study of the play and the formation of sound critical judgment will prepare the theatre worker and build a foundation for practical work, but they will never make him a successful director or actor if he does not possess the initial gifts and special talents which we have discussed in the earlier chapters.

CHAPTER VIII

STAGE CONSTRUCTION AND ADAPTATION

We have been told many times that the poet can compose his poem in a garret, in a comfortable study or beneath a tree beside a country road; that a sculptor or painter needs only a bare room and a few materials for the creation of his statue or picture. Many of the arts do not suffer from the poverty of their creators. But the director, unlike these artists, must have a theatre before he can create his play. Throughout our study of the process of production, we have taken the theatre for granted. It is now time to approach the problem of the theatre itself.

A theatre containing a comfortable, well proportioned auditorium, a dignified and beautiful proscenium, a spacious, well equipped stage, convenient dressing rooms and a workshop, is the dream of every theatre organization. That the dream occasionally becomes a reality is proved by the numbers of fine community, art, and school theatres which are appearing more and more frequently throughout the country. Strenuous

effort should always be made toward the realization of this dream, for while halls, saloon buildings, barns and warehouses may be adapted to theatrical purposes, the romantic and picturesque side of this adaptation is usually more pleasant than the practical results. Our efforts should be directed toward building a good theatre rather than toward telling a sentimental story of "how we remodelled a barn into a playhouse."

Yet there are numberless situations in which the theatre organization cannot have a good theatre, and must even deny itself the remote hope of one. The adaptation of whatever can be found or whatever can be afforded is often necessary. Fortunately, no school or urban community is without some room or building which can be remodelled into an acceptable playhouse. In the college, perhaps the Chemistry Department is moving into its own building, leaving the old laboratory available, or a new chapel is being erected and the old one can be secured. In the town, there are abandoned churches, business buildings, even dwelling houses which can be rearranged satisfactorily.

1. The Work of Adaptation

When the prospect of a new theatre becomes hopeful, whether it is to be a new building or

one remodelled from an old structure, there is one thing which an organization should never do: it should never give the work of building or remodelling to an architect, leaving all the plans in his hands. General architects, if we are to judge them by what they have given us, seem to know very little about theatre needs and conveniences. They misplace the footlights; they put in solid walls which interfere with the manipulation of scenery; they make the stage too shallow; they have even been known to cover the stage with a tin roof! Theatre workers, men and women who have had experience with scenery, lighting and acting problems, and especially with the problems of staging plays, should be consulted.

It is the experienced worker who knows what should be avoided and what should be secured. He knows that the ideal stage should have plenty of height, plenty of width, and plenty of depth. He has learned that if but one of these is possible, he will make his choice between height and width. With height many stage effects can be obtained which can not be obtained otherwise; with width the great gain is in convenience of manipulation of scenery. In the majority of cases, the worker, allowing his artistic desires to triumph over his practical sense, will give the victory to height. Depth, while desirable, is not as necessary as either height or width.

We do not mean the height of the proscenium opening when we speak of stage height; we mean the height from the stage floor to the roof, beams or flies, above the stage. The height of the proscenium opening is not of great practical importance. It is true that an opening approaching in shape the square, or the rectangle on end, is more impressive and beautiful than a low, wide opening: but the impression created by a beautiful proscenium lasts only until the play begins, and the period during the performance of the play is of greater importance than the period preceding it or the intermission periods. The full height of a square proscenium is seldom if ever used; indeed, for most plays a half, or even a third, of the height of the square is sufficient. A low opening, therefore, with a solid construction above it (rather than the drapes and teasers frequently employed) is usually more practicable than a high opening. We are referring, of course, to a situation in which height is limited and must be carefully conserved or divided, rather than to a situation in which height is limitless.

The architect would, perhaps, never think of height as being of great importance; certainly he never thinks that an unfinished stage is more practicable than a finished one. If the plans are left with him, the stage walls are frequently lathed and plastered, the woodwork finished and painted.

An experienced theatre worker wants an unfinished stage, one in which the rafters and beams and (if possible) the boarded walls are untouched, one in which not a square foot of plaster is in sight. The finished stage is not only more expensive, it is decidedly inconvenient. The stage manager can drive nails and hooks into beams, he can suspend scenery from rafters, but he cannot do these things easily if the walls and ceiling are plastered.

The architect whose imagination does not carry him through the performance of a play with its attendant changes of scene, is apt to place posts or beams in positions which will always make them annoying and inconvenient to the stage manager; he may even put the steam pipes or plumbing in such a position that they will successfully prevent the use of a cyclorama drop. The architect frequently thinks conventionally in this matter, while the theatre worker wants unencumbered space, and as much of it as is possible for him to have.

Height above the proscenium opening, an unfinished stage, and an unencumbered stage space, —these three things should be included, when possible, in any remodelling project. Let us now consider the question of proportion as it applies to the stage. If we choose (and our choice is here made wholly at random), several little theatres of recent construction or adaptation, we

may be able to gather suggestions for our proportions. The theatres we have in mind are a community, private, experimental art, and a church theatre, situated in different parts of the country. As we consider each case, we shall take the unit 10 for the width of the stage opening, and reduce our other proportions accordingly.

Pasadena Community Theatre (Pasadena, California)

width, stage opening	10
width, stage space	20.5
depth, stage space	10
depth, auditorium (seating)	20
width, auditorium (seating)	18.2
height, proscenium	6.3
height, stage space	20

Blythelea Theatre (remodelled from stables on a New Jersey estate)

width, stage opening	10
width, stage space	15.2
depth, stage space	9.7
depth, auditorium (seating)	19.2
width, auditorium (seating)	12.8
height, proscenium	6
height, stage floor to dome	8.4

Ram's Head Players' Theatre (Washington D. C.)

width, stage opening 10
width, stage space 16.9
depth, stage space 9.4
depth, auditorium (seating) 25
width, auditorium (seating) 19.4
height, proscenium 6.6
height, stage space 13.2

Community Church Theatre (White Plains, New York)

width, stage opening 10
width, stage space 16.6
depth, stage space 11.6
depth, auditorium (seating) 26.6
width, auditorium (seating) 13.3
height, proscenium 5.5
height, stage floor to dome 10

From these figures, several deductions are possible. The proscenium opening is approximately .6 as high as it is wide. The width of the proscenium opening and the depth of the stage are about the same. The stage space on either side of the opening varies in width; the width of the building, in a case of remodelling, generally determines the width of the stage space. The Pasadena theatre, which was designed and built as a theatre and is not the result of remodelling, has a stage space on either side of the opening equal to the width of the proscenium opening.

In all four theatres there is height. In the first, the stage height extends above the opening over twice the distance from the floor to the top of the opening; in the third, it is as high again; in the second and fourth, which have domes, the height is not so great, but in front of the dome in each case several more feet of height may be counted.

Let us suppose that we have for remodelling, a room seventy feet long, forty feet wide, and sixteen feet high. Our first task is to divide our space into auditorium and stage. After allowing for a stage depth of twenty feet, we have left an auditorium space capable of comfortably seating 350 to 400 people. Since we have a seating space of forty feet, we cannot have a proscenium width of less than twenty feet, either for convenience of staging or for the convenience of the audience. Our next problem, and our most difficult and important one, concerns the proscenium height. For a twenty foot opening, we should have a proscenium height of thirteen or fourteen feet. This, however, is impossible since the entire height of the room is only sixteen feet. If the auditorium floor can be raised and slanted, then the height of the stage above the floor need be only two feet, or perhaps only twenty inches; but if the floor remains level, we shall need more

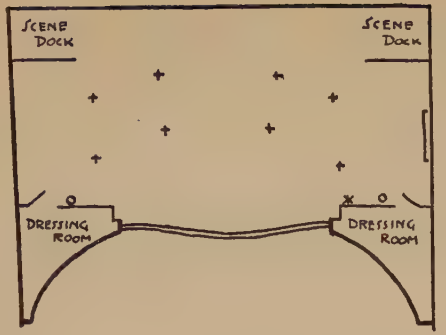
height: perhaps three feet. We have now only thirteen or fourteen feet from stage floor to ceiling. Let us sincerely hope that we can cut through the ceiling above the stage, so that we can have height above the stage. As stated before, this height is very desirable. But if we cannot have it, we must make the best of a very inconvenient but common situation. We cannot possibly get along with less than three feet from the top of the proscenium to the ceiling. This will leave us only ten feet for the height of our opening, which is hardly enough. However, it seems the best we can do, and it is possible to get along with it. With an inner proscenium of drapes we may be able to give an illusion to the shape of the opening which is more satisfactory than the shape of the solid proscenium.

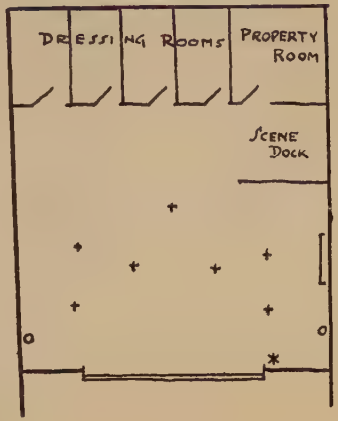
We have not yet provided for dressing room space. We need a large room or two small ones opening off the stage. If we have no such room, we may be able to provide for dressing rooms on the floor below the stage or on the floor above, connecting them with the stage by a narrow stairway. If none of these suggestions are possible, we will have to provide dressing room space in the auditorium space. We can do this by curving our stage walls from each side of the proscenium out towards the side walls of the auditorium,

utilizing the space down in front and at either side of the stage, which because of its location, is unsuitable for seats.

We should have a property room, work room, make-up room, and a green room. The property room can be on the stage, or near it; the work room should open on to the stage; the make-up room need not be on or adjoining the stage; the green room can be anywhere where the actors can assemble before the show or between the acts. The dimensions of the room which we have been considering for our remodelling do not permit us to have any of these rooms, and we will have to do without them.

It is apparent that no plan for remodelling or adapting can be suggested which will be applicable to any specific situation which arises. Like so many problems connected with the theatre, that of building is largely individual. It may be that the remodelling plan is so extensive that, in reality, it calls for the building of a new theatre. In this case, Irving Pichel's little book, "On Building a Theatre," should be consulted, designs which have appeared in The Theatre Arts Monthly studied, and little theatres in nearby communities investigated. If the organization cannot hope for a permanent theatre, but has to make a temporary theatre out of an unadorned chapel stage (to take an example far distant from the





SUGGESTIVE PLANS FOR STAGES ADAPTED FROM STAGE SPACES OF VARYING SHAPES AND SIZES

* SWITCHBOARD, CURTAIN MECHANISM, PROMPTER

o FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

\+ FLOOR PLUGS

DROP AND BORDER ROPES

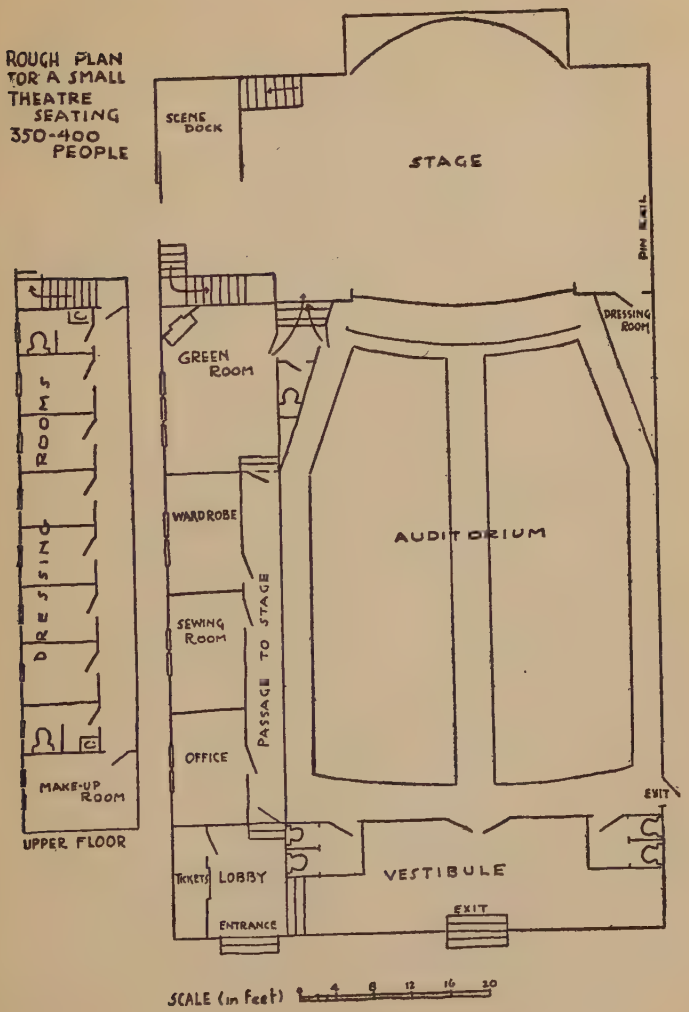
SCALE (in Feet) 0 5 10 15 20 25

first) some sort of frame work has to be devised which will support a proscenium, curtain, and light and sky borders. In this case one can learn much of value from Stuart Walker's Portmanteau Theatre and from the amateur travelling companies which tour certain parts of the country during the summer months.

2. Equipment and Arrangement

Even though we can offer no plan (because there is no general problem), we may make several suggestions for the arrangement and equipment of the stage.

The stage should be equipped with some means of protection against fire. The builders will, of course, look into the state and city fire laws and see that they are complied with. Fire extinguishers should be placed in convenient locations about the stage, where they are easily visible and where they are not likely to be hidden by scenery or properties. The switchboard and the curtain mechanism should be on the same side of the stage. It is advisable to have as complete a switchboard as the budget will allow. Here is one matter in which the organization can afford to be extravagant. The convenience and satisfaction resulting from a well arranged, adequate switchboard cannot be emphasized too strongly.


ROUGH PLAN FOR A SMALL THEATRE SEATING 350-400 PEOPLE
SCENE DOCK
STAGE
PIN RAIL
DRESSING ROOM
GREEN ROOM
WARDROBE
AUDITORIUM
SEWING ROOM
PASSAGE TO STAGE
OFFICE
EXIT
DRESSING ROOMS
MAKE-UP ROOM
UPPER FLOOR
TICKETS
LOBBY
VESTIBULE
ENTRANCE
EXIT
SCALE (in Feet) 0 4 8 12 16 20

What sort of a front curtain should be recommended? If the height permits, the decision will probably be for a curtain that can be raised and not rolled; though the greatest argument that is heard against the "roll" curtain is that it is out of style. Otherwise, it is efficient and satisfactory. Draw curtains are popular, and when they can be depended upon to operate without difficulty, are very pleasing. A front curtain of some dark, heavy cloth is always preferable to a painted canvass curtain.

Near the electrician and the curtain mechanism should be the prompter's box. The prompter should not only be in a position to see the stage, but should be near the electrician and the curtain man. If it is practicable, a push button should be placed conveniently near the prompter's box, with electrical connections which communicate with the dressing rooms. The prompter can then keep in touch with the actors and warn them of their entrance cues.

The only fixed electrical equipment absolutely necessary is the first border. The more floor plugs and wall plugs there are on the stage, the more practicable, from the standpoint of lighting, the stage becomes. If permanent footlights are installed, care must be taken in the depth of the footlight trough and its distance in front of the proscenium opening. The depth and dis-

tance must be such that the light shall be held within the proscenium frame, and shall neither produce a dark shadow upon the stage floor, nor illuminate the space around the proscenium opening.

The stage floor should not be of polished hardwood. How often does the stage manager find that the stage floor upon which he is asked to set his scenery, cannot be marred by screws or nails, and the problem of bracing his scenery to the floor is well-nigh unsolvable. A cheap flooring, and a floor covering, are much more practicable.

A scene dock,—a space set aside for the storage of scenery, and containing grooves in which the flats run easily,—is a convenience which no stage should be without.

Much has already been said in the chapter on the art director, concerning light equipment, scenery construction, masking, and bracing. It remains to be said, that in stage equipment the comfort of the actors should not be disregarded. The stage should be ventilated and well heated. Frequently ventilation is neglected entirely and the heating is inadequate. An actor, when he is acting, may forget about the cold and will not be aware of any lack of ventilation. But he should not be put to any avoidable discomfort during the times when the curtain is down and when he is waiting in the wings. We surely do

not need to add that lavatories should be convenient to the stage.

3. The Stage Rooms

We have called attention to four rooms which will make the theatre more usable. While a property room, separate from the work room, is not necessary, it is very convenient. The work room, which should be spacious and unencumbered, can then be used for the building of scenery and properties, and for painting and dyeing, while the property room can be used for the storage of the numerous hand properties, which accumulate at a rapid rate, and for the stage tools, electrical equipment, etc. It is difficult to preserve order during the process of production. The chances are that the work shop will be in a state of disorder, if not of complete chaos. Such being the case, the property room should be well arranged and orderly. If it is, it will not only add to the convenience of the stage workers, but will be, in the midst of the confusion, a pleasant place to go to for nails, paint or whatnot; even one little room, if it is kept clean and orderly, will have a good effect upon the morale of the workers.

If possible, the dressing rooms should be ventilated. They should contain good lights, a good mirror and chairs. They need not be large. The

actors can make up either in their dressing room, or in a room especially equipped for make-up work. If there is a special make-up room, it should contain several long tables, either set against the walls or in the centre of the room. These tables should be divided into sections, each section being separated from the next by a partition which prevents, to as great an extent as possible, the lights of one section interfering with the lights of another. Each section should contain a good mirror and two lights: one above the mirror, the other, probably on a movable stand, on the table below the mirror. With this double light arrangement the actor can make up under the same general light conditions which he will find upon the stage. If only the footlights are to be used, he can make up with the light below the mirror; if only the borders are to be used, he can make up with the light above; and if colored lights are to be used, he can screw other bulbs into the sockets, and make up in colored light.

The green room is neither an innovation nor a luxury. It is hundreds of years old. It affords the actors a place to meet and gossip and wait. We have paid very little attention to the convenience of our actors in our non-professional theatres, and no attention to their comfort. Every non-professional theatre needs a green room. The general spirit of the company will be

raised if it has such a room of its own. A room simply but comfortably furnished and easy of access to the stage, is all that is necessary. When nothing better can be done about it, the organization will not find the time and effort wasted, if, on the nights of the performance, the work room is put in order and transformed into a temporary green room.

CHAPTER IX

TEACHING PLAY PRODUCTION

In one of the opening chapters of this book we stated that the teacher has become an important figure in non-professional drama, especially school drama. We have not mentioned the teacher during our study of the process of production. Perhaps we should have done so; for there is no single individual who is more thoroughly concerned with all phases of the process than the teacher; much of the preliminary training of actors, artists, and directors, is in the hands of the teacher-directors who are offering courses in production in our schools and colleges. We have in reality been talking about the problems of the teacher-director throughout most of the book. It would be repetitious to take up in this chapter those questions which we have studied in Chapters IV, V, and VI. Let the teacher feel that these chapters apply to his own work as well as to the work of the independent theatre workers. The present chapter, therefore, will concern the work of the teacher only in so far as it is different in

content and aim from the work of the director in general.

We should begin by emphasizing two significant facts. Since the acted play has been raised to a position of dignity in education, a much greater responsibility has fallen upon the teacher. Since the standard of amateur production has advanced, an equipment is necessary for the teacher which was not necessary a few years ago.

For a number of years there was a unity of feeling in school and college faculties against the inclusion of courses in the acted play. The faculties saw that the work in the "dramatic art" classes was thin, and was being carried on in a shiftless manner. The dramatic art teachers were not scholars, they were not well trained, often they could not select good plays and knew but little about directing, acting, and staging, while their courses attracted large numbers of weak, lazy students who were on the alert for courses in which they could receive credits without working for them. All this being true, the feeling of the faculties was justified. But from these conditions which we have described, they drew an unfair conclusion when they declared that practical dramatic work is unacademic and without educational value. Basing their conclusion upon their personal observation of practical

drama, they were justified in holding a low opinion of it; but potentially, practical drama embraced then, as it does now, a mental and physical training, a sharpening of the powers of visualization and auditization, an opening of the mind to the experiences of mankind, a development of the emotional life, and a contact with the theory and practice of many arts,—all of which are desirable in the education of the individual.

Thanks to the pioneer teachers, who, partaking of the enthusiasm and imagination of the little theatre workers, went into the schools and raised the standard of the work, the first criticism against the inclusion of the acted play in the curriculums, has lost its force; and since the courses are more thorough and intelligent, the second criticism is heard less and less frequently. The teachers of drama have become respected members of the faculties and the acted play has been raised to a position of dignified study.

1. The Teacher's Equipment

A peculiar equipment is as necessary to the teacher of practical drama as it is to the teacher of advanced composition or the appreciation of music. It is the duty of the student or theatre worker who is considering the profession of teach-

ing to discover whether or not he has the equipment necessary for the successful conduct of his work.

The first equipment of the teacher consists in a theoretical knowledge of the play and a practical knowledge of the process of its production. It should be unnecessary to mention this fact, but the prevailing condition proves otherwise. Many teachers who have neither the theoretical nor the practical knowledge are endeavoring to teach production. The teacher usually has no staff, no group of trained assistants to call upon. He is alone. He is dealing with a work which is unusually complex, as we have endeavored to make clear. He is not only a teacher, but is director, art director, critic, and not infrequently painter, electrician, and actor. Since the standard has been raised, better productions are necessary; we demand a great deal more than a simple recitation of lines by the actors; we expect something better than a fancy, shoddy, stock set which has seen a dozen years of hard service. The teacher, if he is to be an asset to his profession, must be able to assume full supervision of the varied and complex work. He may not be able to meet all the demands made upon him, but he is meeting them now more frequently than he did a few years ago, and he must meet them more and more often if the work in the schools is to justify itself with both students

and public; if it is going to compete successfully with the non-professional dramatic activities carried on by organizations not allied with educational institutions. The work in the schools must be maintained at a standard which will justify on dramatic, artistic, and technical grounds, its appearance in public.

Of almost equal importance with an adequate training is a physical and spiritual equipment. The teacher needs unwavering enthusiasm, perseverance, and physical energy. To come to rehearsals day after day with the same high enthusiasm, to be able to create and communicate the desired atmosphere of the play, to persist until the students are moved into this atmosphere, to expend the amount of energy necessary to inspire his actors and lift them into the characterizations and into the dramatic situations,—there are a few of the demands made upon him. He must be able to repeat his work day after day; for when the play he is working on is produced, there is always another play awaiting him. Other teachers must inspire their students—the teacher of poetry, for example; but oh, the difference between the energy expended in the teaching of poetry and that expended in the teaching of practical drama!

With this equipment the teacher may find that he is able to carry on his work; but there is a third requirement made of the teacher who wishes

to accomplish more than the routine work. This requirement may be designated as a stage sense, or as an instinct for the stage. We find certain people who have a "knack" for mathematics, others have a knack for playing musical instruments, or for putting together clocks or automobiles; so there are those who have a knack for putting together plays. We may be very enthusiastic over drama, we may understand it, and yet, we may not be able to stage successful productions. With this stage sense, our success, from a technical standpoint, is assured. The sense includes several things, not the least important of which is a clear sanity in the matter of our whole task, a sanity which will direct us to a frequent survey of our work so that we shall not find ourselves journeying down some interesting but unimportant by-path, or standing still, lost in sentimental "flub-dubbery." The teacher needs an intuitive knowledge of the stage, a *feel* for scenery, acting, lines, audience, and extreme sensitiveness to the acted play during the process of its creation: to its purpose and its essentials.

This, then, is the teacher's equipment. Would it be impertinent if we were to add to this equipment the essential qualification of all first rate teachers: vision? Every teacher has been told that he should have vision. The statement holds true despite its frequent repetition. It should be

the call which he has heard from afar and the goal which is before him. Vision will make his work alive and vigorous and progressive.

Before he decides to dedicate the best years of his life to the service of drama, he should determine whether he possesses the necessary equipment: theoretical knowledge of drama, practical knowledge of production, enthusiasm, perseverance, physical energy, and a stage sense; and having found himself equipped, he should set out with high hopes, holding fast to his belief in drama's present and to his faith in its greater future.

2. Methods and Aims in Teaching

Fortunately education, with its octopus of system, has not yet squeezed the teaching of production into the narrow confines of a method wherein it can neither move nor breathe save as its master wishes. There are no text books on the theory of production, no "science," no "plans" for courses. For this we may indeed be thankful. It will be an ominous day for non-professional drama when the teaching of production succumbs to a method. Its freedom and individuality are among its most praiseworthy features. Beyond the dictation which the very nature of a course in production makes: that the class room shall be a

laboratory and the work informal, the teacher chooses his own path and adopts his own method. Personality, of course, largely determines the method (and in this connection the teacher may refer to the opening pages of the chapter on the director). Without a prescribed routine the task of teaching becomes more difficult, but the results, if the teacher is equipped for his work, far outbalance the added hours spent in preparation.

Even so, there may be several suggestions which he can fit into his own particular method. He will find one recurrent task in his teaching: to awaken the creative instincts of his students in respect to their work on the stage. The beginning student frequently has to have his eyes, mind, and imagination opened to a new world which operates differently from the world of actuality, and one which calls for creation as well as imitation. This awakening process is not an easy one.

The beginning student-director employs little or no imagination in his stage business. He patterns his direction on convention, on what he has seen done before, and in consequence his direction is uninteresting and dramatically trite. To awaken the beginning director, the teacher may take two imaginary characters, for example, an old man and his young daughter, and place them on an imaginary stage near a table and chair; he may then ask the student to think out

all the various positions these characters can assume in relation to each other and in relation to the pieces of furniture. The problem may be stated at first without reference to the emotion of the scene or to pictorial value; after the student has experimented with this problem, it may be made more definite by assigning a dominant emotion to the scene, by ascribing certain physcial and psychological characteristics and limitations to the characters, by asking the student to consider each grouping with reference to its pictorial possibilities. Through some such problem (and the teacher will be able to think of many similar ones) the possibility for variety in stage business may be impressed upon the student.

As we have inferred, the beginner directs, not so much through his creative mind as through his memory. Positions, crossings, stage business, come to him from past observation and experience, and he employs the first business he remembers, which becomes, in his mind, the right business. A student is sometimes led to think, constructively, about direction, by having him witness a play which he is presenting followed or preceded by the same play directed by another student. As he contrasts his own work with the work of another, as he listens to the teacher's comments and to the class room discussion of the two productions, he may be awakened to the habit of creative thought

in the matter of direction. The teacher finds the student's power of visualization undeveloped. He often does not see the stage as he works out his business, and even when the play is in rehearsal, he is uncertain about the exact location of doors, windows, and furniture. Occasionally this uncertainty about his stage causes trouble at the dress rehearsal period. The power of visualization may be developed through the use of stage models. A student who is compelled to design his model and work from it, must see what he is doing. It isn't necessary that the models be carefully and painstakingly constructed, for, as we have said elsewhere, it is easy for a student to spend a great amount of time on his model and forget the fact that the model is only a means to an end. Under the guidance of a sane teacher this should not happen. Instead, the model may serve for instruction in design, color, and direction.

We have been speaking of method as though the teacher is conducting a class which is a unit. Such is not usually the case. A class in production is frequently composed of students who have a variety of aims; and the teacher's aims (and to some extent his methods) are greatly influenced by the composition of his particular class.

The teacher finds in his class those who, intending to teach after leaving school, are eager to acquire all the information which will be of help to

them in "putting on plays." Toward such students the teacher has both a spiritual and a material duty. He should inspire them with a wholesome respect for drama, with an appreciation of the finer and subtler aspects of drama, and he should give them such training as will equip them for their work. We shall have more to say about the spiritual duty in the last section. In regard to the material duty, the teacher will, of course, acquaint these students with the facts and problems of staging: the building of scenery, the arrangement of lighting, the organization of the production staff; and this acquaintance will be made in practical work and not in theoretical discussions. To be sure, he will suggest lists of plays, names of publishing houses, bibliographies of books on the theatre arts; but his emphasis will be on the practical work. Frequently these students are more anxious to fill note books than they are to act and make properties. They need experience in practical stage work. The teacher should insist upon their acting so that they will have a sympathetic understanding of the actor's viewpoint; he should insist upon their directing; upon their painting scenery; and he might even insist upon their trying a hand at composing a play, for such an exercise will often lead them to a higher respect for the art of the dramatist.

The teacher occasionally finds in his class the

student who says he wants to act, but who in reality has only lost his head and wants to show off; who looks upon acting as an easy, pleasant diversion which will win him applause. The teacher's course is clear with this student; hard work and an absence of praise will usually discourage his silly ambition.

There is, however, the student who is sincere in his desire to act, who is willing to work hard in order to make his dream—a rôle on the professional stage—come true. The teacher should study such a boy or girl carefully. It is unfair of him to hold out a future to the student who is without ability. Even though the student be sincere, if he possesses no talent the teacher will be doing him a fine service in discouraging him.

However, when the teacher discovers a boy or girl with acting talent and stage sense, he should, of course, give him all the training he is able to give; he should start him developing every power which will be called into the service of acting; he should begin the process of exchanging intuition for technique. But even while he is encouraging the student and helping him, he should repeatedly warn him of the long, weary road which the professional actor is compelled to take. The doors of the professional theatre are not opened easily. He may have to stand outside for days and years, knocking, and receiving no answer. Perhaps,

even after his years of struggle, he will be denied admittance. The ambitious amateur should be told frankly of the dangers and discouragements which are awaiting him; and if the teacher is unfamiliar with these discouragements, he has only to turn to the printed statements of the professional managers and successful actors.

Happily the teacher may soon be able to point out to the student another path upon which he may find the satisfaction he desires. The non-professional theatre, as found in community and little theatre organizations, is constantly raising the standard, playing plays for longer periods, and employing better directors. Such theatres are usually glad to welcome him. They offer him a small and limited public and no financial returns, as yet; but they give him an opportunity to work under expert direction, they offer him a chance to act and to gratify, in some degree, his ambitions, without lowering his standards or losing respect either for himself or for the actor's art. Then, too, the step is much shorter from the little theatre stage to the professional stage than it is from the school to the professional stage.

There is still another kind of student which the teacher will meet: the student who has no ambitions towards practical production of drama, but who is enthusiastic about the theatre and desirous of increasing his knowledge of stage craft. Here

the teacher's duty is to develop an enlightened and intelligent theatre-goer.

A class in production is never a unit. The teacher instead of having one aim must have many. Much of his work must be individual work, and he frequently feels himself insufficient to meet all the individual demands.

3. Raising the Standard of Judgment

One thing the teacher can always strive to do: he can endeavor to raise the standard of judgment of his students; and if he does this well, he cannot feel that his efforts have been wasted.

Few students of high school or college age are conscious devotees of either the good or the bad play. They may go with the crowd, and so witness a preponderance of bad plays, but they are seldom willing to make a bold defense of the bad play against the good one. They, more often than their elders, can attend a good play and enjoy it. The teacher, recognizing their undeveloped judgment, and sensing their eagerness to learn and to be on the right side of things, finds one of his happiest and most profitable tasks in his endeavor to give his students a standard of judgment, an appreciation and a discrimination in the matter of the acted play.

Just how is this task to be accomplished? Something may be done towards preparing the ground for a change in standard by demonstrating that present day drama may be divided into two kinds: drama which is an honest expression of life and a form of art, and drama which is an adroit piece of craftsmanship but written down to the thoughts and emotions of an ignorant, undiscriminating public. Externally, the two kinds are the same. They are cast in the same mold and subscribe to the same stage ritual. But internally they are as unlike as truth and falsehood. An examination and interpretation of such plays as Shaw's "Candida," O'Neill's "Beyond the Horizon," Mitchell's "The New York Idea," Galsworthy's "Justice" and Jones' "Mary Goes First," and a comparison of such plays with the popular, up-to-the-minute Broadway successes, will disclose, on the one hand, an intellectual honesty, a reserve, a beauty, a logical development of plot, a truth to character and a sincerity of emotion, and on the other hand, an intellectual shallowness, an emotional falseness, a cheapness and loudness, a clever manipulation of the tricks and "hokum" of the theatre. The difference between the two kinds becomes especially clear in the actual presentation of the plays. An intelligent student will see the soundness of construction, the "meatiness" of the

characterizations, the depth and fullness of the entire play, and he will find a much greater joy in acting in it.

This discovery alone is insufficient to raise the student's standard of judgment. What else may be done? We are told that enjoyment of the finer and subtler qualities of an art are increased through the acquisition of knowledge about its technique, its process of creation, its function. If we live with a painter for a summer, our interest in art galleries and art magazines increases, and because of what we have learned about pictures, we study them with greater pleasure and pride. So with drama. Let a student learn about the organic parts of a play, let him become acute enough to distinguish in a production the work of actor, author, and director, or let him learn all there is to know about the author's expository problems, and his interest in drama has been enlarged. Increased knowledge does not necessarily raise the standard of judgment any more than the discovery of good and bad plays does; but knowledge begets interest and pride, and these lead to investigation which brings to light comparisons and contrasts, and *may* develop discrimination.

When his knowledge increases, he is on his way towards greater discrimination. The person un-

acquainted with the less subtle elements of drama cannot hope to appreciate its more subtle ones; but the person acquainted with the less subtle organic parts will be led to see the beauty and ingenuity in a scene which is handled suggestively rather than realistically; he will discover that there are indirect ways of conveying character; he will see shadings and transitions, and all the subtle handling of plot which may be found in the better plays. Such an insight will awaken the aesthetic sense, and an awakened aesthetic sense makes higher demands of a play and its production than does ignorance or indifference.

Again, the standard of judgment is raised through a continued acquaintanceship, in the class-room and in the theatre, with first rate plays which are soundly and artistically written. In this matter the good play reacts upon the individual with the same effect as did the good wine in the old story. The tale goes that a French peasant was in the habit of drinking, with his noonday meal, a very inferior grade of wine. He was quite content with his wine and had no desire to change. But, unknown to him, a wine of a very fine vintage was substituted for the cheaper grade. He went on drinking without surprise, without even the knowledge that a change had been made. After several weeks had passed, again without his knowledge he

was given the cheap wine which had previously satisfied him. But now he knew immediately that something was wrong, and he became quite angry, declaring that someone had been meddling with his wine and had substituted a poorer quality.

The point of this story is applicable to the case of drama and the student, and the teacher finds in it the most reasonable and certain of all his hopes for creating the desire for better drama.

But let him not forget that his own personality counts for much in the matter of the student's judgment. Personality is more effective than a mind brimming over with information; it is the personality of the teacher which the student will remember long after he has forgotten all the worthy facts which the teacher has poured into his mind. This is a platitude but it merits one more repetition. It goes without saying that if the teacher is to help the student to a finer discrimination, his own judgment must be sound; but if he has intelligence and sincerely enjoys good drama and believes in it with enthusiasm, his enthusiastic belief will be contagious.

Surely no one is dreaming of an advance in the general level of drama until the public develops a greater discrimination. And who has a greater opportunity to do effective work in developing a keener appreciation and sounder judgment than

the teacher? The teacher need never apologize for the character of his profession nor complain of opportunity for constructive work in the cause of drama.

THE END

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